

WEEKLY FREE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

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FREE

Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk February 21, 2016

East edition No 700

HEALTH

Parents 'thank you' for meningitis petition

Family of tragic toddler respond to social media campaign

CAMPAIGN

Blood scandal: The fight goes on

Seven years on from Archer report and still there's no justice

PROPERTY

House prices in the county rocketing

Getting ready to sell your house? You need to read this...

EVENTS

Air show's legacy

How Biggin Hill shows once inspired a generation of aviation enthusiasts

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Treasure good health as you'll miss it when it goes

IT'S a cliché, certainly, but truly you don't cherish good health until it is gone.

And inside this weekend's Kent on Sunday we feature two very different stories about two health tragedies.

The first is the highly publicised case of little Faye Burdett - the Maidstone toddler whose body was ravaged by meningitis in such a cruel way. She died a week ago today.

Social media is so often crammed to the gills with pointless, worthless rubbish, yet was used to good effect this week in a bid to gather the signatures needed on a petition started on the government's website, calling for children to receive an available vaccination.

In fact, just as we were going to press, it became the petition with the highest recorded number of names on the site - no doubt by the time you read this it will be hurtling towards one million.

But it is driven



Editor **Chris Britcher**

by a black and white argument. Of course, if there is a vaccine available to prevent an awful illness, all children should receive it. It is every parent's very worst nightmare to see their child suffer. Adding your name is hardly making a difficult choice.

Which is a similar situation, in some respects, to the other health story we feature - as part of our on-going campaign to get justice for those given contaminated blood and their lives either taken from them or good health forever denied them.

The issue there, again, is clear cut. There can be no excuses, there should be no argument. For too long they have sought what they deserve; and that is to be treated fairly.

I'd urge you to read both. They are very different cases but both utterly persuasive.

And you can be sure KoS will be returning to update both over the coming weeks.

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HOW TO CONTACT US...

Publisher: Simon Irwin
Email simon.irwin@archant.co.uk
Editor: Chris Britcher
Email chris.britcher@archant.co.uk
Address: Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP
Editorial: News: 01233 653475
Sport/Leisure: 01233 653479
Email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk
Advertising:
Jobs/Notices: 01233 653461
Business: 01233 653461
Email appointments@kosmedia.co.uk
Retail/Leisure/Motors: 01233 653461
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Distribution: 01233 653470

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Eurotunnel wants £22m for migrant disruption

By Tom Pugh

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

EUROTUNNEL has asked the British and French governments to reimburse it 29 million euros (£22m) for lost revenue during last year's cross-Channel migrant crisis.

The Channel Tunnel operator faced major problems last year as migrants, camped in what has been dubbed 'the Jungle' in Calais, broke through security fencing close to the Coquelles terminal in France and attempted to either board trains or access the UK by running down the tunnel.

As each security breach was detected, services were forced to grind to a halt.

Now it says that as part of the statutes drawn up when the company was created, it is making the big claim. It says security on either side of the tunnel is the responsibility of the relevant nation's government.

However, some will question claiming back from the taxpayer money lost as the company revealed a rise in revenues.

It made the claim for the cash via the Intergovernmental Commis-



SERVICES: Chairman and CEO Jacques Gounon at unveiling of financial figures

sion as it revealed a 22 per cent dividend increase to be proposed at its AGM on April 27.

Despite an uncertain global outlook, Eurotunnel predicted further growth in the cross-Channel and rail freight markets amid strength in the British economy.

As it revealed its 2015 annual results, Eurotunnel said there has been no disruption to services since last October following strengthened border security at the

Coquelles terminal.

It said revenues increased by five per cent to 1.2 billion euro (£926m) compared to 2014. And the group's pre-tax profit for 2015 was 115m euro (£89m), an improvement of 25m euro (£19m) compared to 2014.

Chairman and chief executive Jacques Gounon said: "In a difficult environment in 2015, the group worked with the efficiency of a private company to deliver a

genuine public service.

"This was achieved through the commitment of its staff, close co-operation with the two governments and an exemplary capacity to react to events."

Earlier this week, Eurotunnel completed work on five new access lanes and a check-in facility for trucks at its terminal in Cheriton - increasing traffic flow through the terminal up to 300 vehicles per hour.

Train firm is bottom of the class once again in Which? survey results

TRAIN firm Southeastern has been branded one of the worst in the country for customer satisfaction, after less than half of commuters revealed they were content with its services.

The annual rail satisfaction survey, conducted by consumer organisation Which?, revealed that Southeastern joined Thameslink and Great Northern at the bottom of the table, with a customer score of just 46 per cent.

This is based on availability of seating, punctuality, cleanliness of trains, reliability and value for money.

Which? executive director Richard Lloyd, said: "Our report shows that commuters are getting a raw deal from their train operator.

"Whether its dirty facilities on the train, overcrowding or delayed trains, it is clear operators need to up their game.

"Rail operators need to do much more to treat their customers fairly, providing better information and

access to compensation when passengers are delayed. Passengers want to see action taken to make rail delay refunds easier and we have asked the regulator to investigate using our super-complaint powers."

A Southeastern spokesman said in response: "While the Which? report questioned fewer passengers than the recent National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) - which shows our overall customer satisfaction rate at 75 per cent - both clearly indicate we have much more to do.

"We're part way through a £70m investment programme, refurbishing our trains and stations, providing more front line employees for passengers, improving customer service training and providing more real time information during journeys.

"Along with Network Rail who look after railway infrastructure such as track and signalling, we're working hard to improve punctuality and minimise delays."

Town centre plans to add '£7m a year' to economy

TUNBRIDGE Wells town centre could benefit up to the tune of £7 million a year from a £70m investment in shopping complex Royal Victoria Place (RVP) goes ahead.

The centre wants to add a multiplex cinema, restaurants and more shops and have lodged a planning application with the town council.

RVP chiefs claim the scheme would create up to 275 jobs worth

an annual addition of £6.9m a year to the local economy.

Centre manager Nicky Blanchard said: "We have a really important role to play in the town centre as a whole, and these figures show just how positive an impact the investment can make on the town centre. We want people to come here and explore what the town has to offer."

Pylon route powers through first planning process stage

NATIONAL Grid's controversial application to build a pylon route between Richborough and Canterbury has cleared its first hurdle.

It is designed to take power from the so-called Nemo Link - which sees electricity pumped from Belgium to Richborough - and then carry it to plug into the National Grid at Canterbury

This week it was accepted for

examination by the planning inspectorate. That means the application will now be assessed and a recommendation made to government in around 12 months' time. Ultimately, the government will decide whether the new connection should be built.

It faces opposition from local MPs who claim the pylons will ruin the landscape.



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Call for your memories of Margate's Dreamland

A SPECIAL event will take place at Margate's Dreamland next month - designed to create a major history bank of visitors' memories of the famous venue.

Return to Dreamland takes place on March 19 and encourages visitors to share photos, ticket stubs, tokens, programmes and stories of their time at the park over the decades.

Dreamland has partnered with SEAS archive and Canterbury Christ Church University to document memories and scan keepsakes to ensure that experiences can be shared with future generations of Dreamland visitors.

The event is free to attend and takes place at the Ballroom in Dreamland from 10am to 7pm.



MUM: Chatham MP Tracey Crouch

Baby delight for MP and Radio Kent DJ

CHATHAM and Aylesford MP Tracey Crouch gave birth to her first child on Thursday morning.

The sports minister, who became the first Conservative minister ever to go on maternity leave, had baby Freddie at Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury.

Her partner is BBC Radio Kent DJ Steve Ladner.

She said: "Steve and I are absolutely delighted to announce the birth of our son Freddie, who arrived into our lives at 6.12am, weighing 7lbs 13oz. He is absolutely perfect.

"Our absolute heartfelt thanks to the midwifery team at the hospital who were amazing and helped me deliver this incredible young man into the world.

"My particular thanks to Justine and Sophie who were with me for 12 hours without a break.

"While I get to know our little man, the office will be picking up my emails and I'm grateful for your patience and understanding."

The birth comes less than a year after Ms Crouch suffered a devastating miscarriage during the general election campaign that nearly saw her turn down the job of sports minister when it was offered to her by the prime minister.

She replaced Maidstone MP Helen Grant in the role after May's election.

Electoral Commission launches probe into Tory South Thanet spending

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

AN INVESTIGATION into the Conservative Party's spending in the South Thanet constituency during last year's general election has been launched.

It comes from election watchdog the Electoral Commission, after allegations that the party exceeded local spending limits were made by Channel 4 News last month.

The investigation focuses on whether reported spending on the Royal Harbour Hotel in Ramsgate and Premier Inn in Margate was not national campaign spending and therefore should not have been included in the party's expenses return.

There are strict limits on spending for each political party in each constituency to ensure fairness.

The commission met with Kent Police earlier this week, who decided not to pursue an investigation into the allegations.

A spokesperson for the commission



WINNER: Tory Craig Mackinlay

said: "The rules around candidate spending and any potential criminal offence are matters for the police to investigate under the Representation of the People Act (RPA) 1983.

"The commission reminded Kent

Police that the ability to investigate these allegations will end one year on from the general election and that unless the police apply to the courts for an extension which they are entitled to do under the RPA, they will have missed the opportunity to investigate any allegations."

Anyone found guilty of an offence under the RPA 1983 relating to candidate spending or the making of a false declaration in relation to candidate spending, could face imprisonment of up to one year, and/or an unlimited fine.

The commission itself has no powers to investigate or sanction candidate spending offences under the RPA but it can investigate national campaign spending, with the power to impose a fine of up to £20,000.

A Conservative spokesperson said: "All spending has been correctly recorded in accordance with the law."

Craig Mackinlay beat Ukip's Nigel Farage in the race for the seat in South Thanet in what became one of the most hotly contested seats in the country.

Cutting edge cinema to open in Orpington

A SELL-OUT crowd is expected next weekend as Orpington unveils its first town centre cinema in 34 years.

The Odeon at the Walnuts Shopping Centre opens on Friday and has slashed prices for the first two days to just £2, prompting a rush to nab tickets.

It is hoped it will play a key part in luring crowds back into the town centre.

It boasts one of only two ISense screens in the UK - enormous curved screens which promise state-of-the-art picture quality.

The main screen will have a 276-seat capacity, with 959 seats spread across all seven screens.

General manager Trevor Cavell said: "We're looking forward to bringing cinema back to Orpington after three decades and welcoming local film fans over our opening weekend."

Among the movies playing at the weekend will be Deadpool, Dad's Army, Goosebumps and the new Star Wars film, The Force Awakens.

Faversham Creek's £100k flood defences

PLANS are on show now for a flood defence embankment proposed for Faversham Creek.

The £100,000 scheme, unveiled by the Environment Agency, is designed to defend properties at Front Brents from flooding.

It will be formed of a grassed embankment approximately 80cm in height. A series of flood gates in the embankment, which will be closed during a flood, will still allow access to the green and creek area.

The scheme has been developed in partnership with Swale Borough Council. Residents of Front Brents have also contributed financially to the project as have Faversham Town Council and Kent County Council.

A public display detailing the scheme was unveiled at Faversham Library on Friday and runs until Thursday, February 25.

Neil Gunn, flood risk engineer, said: "We would encourage the public to attend the consultation event and provide us with their opinions."

Construction is proposed to start in the early summer.

City and town fight it out for In Bloom title

CANTERBURY and Deal have been selected to battle it out in the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Britain in Bloom UK finals.

They will join Bournemouth, Farnham and Ryde representing the south and south east, hoping to secure one of the most prestigious community crowns.

They were nominated following the regional stage of judging in 2015. The groups were selected for their outstanding commitment to environmental responsibility, community participation and gardening achievement, and will join 67 other finalists from across the UK.

In August this year, they will lead Britain in Bloom judges on a tour of local projects and initiatives in the hope of being awarded gold in their individual categories at the annual award ceremony in October.

Peter Holman, chair of south and south east in Bloom, said: "Their community spirit and sense of pride in being nominated is already starting to show as they make their preparations."

UFO alert as strange lights are seen hovering in the sky

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

MYSTERIOUS lights spotted in the Folkestone sky have sparked new UFO theories across the county.

Last Sunday morning witnesses reported seeing a number of bright lights in the sky above Folkestone and Hythe.

They remaining there for about half an hour - and were apparently spotted by a number of people.

There was some suggestion they came from the nearby military barracks - but this has apparently been denied. Some claimed they looked like flares which could have been sent up to illuminate battle training grounds on a gloomy morning.

However, in the same month that classic alien conspiracy TV drama X Files returned to our screens, it once again triggered interest in what may be in our skies.

A spokesperson from the Kent Unidentified Flying Objects Research Group said: "Spotting UFOs across Kent and the Channel tends to happen quite frequently - and have increased dramatically over the past few years."

Previous UFO sightings in the county include one in Chatham in 2012, when mysterious floating objects were captured on film by an unsuspecting snapper as they drifted over the town.



LIGHTS: Was this an alien encounter above our homes last weekend?

The strange orbs, or very similar ones, were later sighted in Essex.

Another took place in Ashford a year later when an eyewitness identifying himself solely as Nigel gave a detailed statement on a UFO facebook page about his sighting in Tenterden: "We were sitting in the garden, sky was perfectly blue without cloud.

"I heard a jet flying over, looked up approximately 2,000/3,000ft directly it there was a completely stationary bright silver object that was metallic in appearance, and cylinder in shape.

"Approximately every 15 seconds it would appear to pulse briefly, giving the appearance of vanishing, it would then re-appear in exactly the same position, slightly black briefly before regaining the silver tube appearance.

"It was high and I remember thinking surely the jet would have identified another object with radar. We watched it for around six minutes when it suddenly completely vanished."

■ **Spotted a UFO? Email our alien correspondent: tom.pyman@archant.co.uk.**

Tory demands return of city road signs

CONSERVATIVE MP Julian Brazier has raised the issue of a missing sign to Canterbury with transport minister Andrew Jones.

Mr Brazier wants to know why the city isn't signposted from junction seven of the M20 via the A249.

The MP said: "For some reason, Highways England think that the best route to Canterbury from the M25 is either via the A2 or M2."

Authority freezes its part of council tax

SWALE Borough Council's share of the council tax will be frozen for the sixth year in a row.

The freeze comes after councillors approved the authority's budget for 2016/17.

However, as reported last week, the biggest slice of the bill is the Kent County Council chunk - which is rising by 3.99 per cent.

Minister visits port

TRANSPORT minister Patrick McLoughlin was at the Port of Dover on Tuesday.

He was making the visit to see development work at the port designed to increase freight capacity.

Tim Waggott, the port's CEO, said: "It was great to show how we, alongside the day job of handling £100bn of the nation's trade, have delivered transformational government policy for Dover."



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Look who's back...bumbling Frank Spencer returns to TV

ACTOR Michael Crawford will reprise his famous role as Frank Spencer in *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em* in a one-off special for Sport Relief.

The cult BBC comedy was last seen on TV on Christmas Day in 1978. Several location shoots for the series took place in the likes of Herne Bay.

Mr Crawford, 74, will reunite with his on-screen wife, Betty, played by Michele Dotrice for the sketch, which will be shown during Sport Relief Night on BBC One on March 18.

Mr Crawford spent much of his childhood living with his mother on Sheppey and attended a Catholic school in Bexleyheath.

The sketch will see Frank land himself in a few of his usual comedy disasters, culminating in a meeting with Olympic cyclist Sir Bradley



Wiggins at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London.

Mr Crawford said: "I am thrilled and delighted to have been asked to bring Frank back for Sport Relief."

Ms Dotrice said it would be an

"absolute joy to be reunited again with Frank" and that it was fitting "for it is such a wonderful cause".

Mr Crawford went on to be a huge star on the West End and in Broadway in big musicals.

Web appeal to raise cash for dead biker's funeral

AN ONLINE fund has been launched to help raise money for the funeral of a motorcyclist who died in a crash in Sheerness earlier this month.

Alessandro Arcadipine, known to everyone as Alex, died on Friday, February 12, as a result of injuries sustained in the collision with a red Citroen C2 at about 10.10am two days before.

Now his friends are aiming to raise £1,000 to give the 26-year-old the send-off he deserves.

The GoFundMe web appeal, set up by Charlene Freshwater, reads: "Heartbreak does not even begin to explain how Alex's family and friends feel during this extremely sad time.

"I have started this page to ask for the kindness of strangers

in raising money to give to Alex's family.

"This is to ensure that during this difficult time his family can give Alex a funeral to show him and the world how much he was loved and how missed he will be.

"Any donation will be gratefully received from his dad Joe and Alex's two daughters Lucy and Ellie."

Earlier in the week, his family paid tribute to "a well-respected young man who stepped up to the plate as a single dad to his two daughters".

Police are still investigating the crash, and officers would like to hear from any motorists who witnessed the collision or who may have driven over debris on Brielle Way near where the collision occurred.

CCG at public meeting

GET your chance to quiz the governing body of the NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) next week.

It is staging a public meeting on Tuesday, February 23, from 1.30pm to 3.30pm at The Mercure Hotel in Pembury. Those wishing to ask a question should call 01732 375200.

Sex abuser is jailed

A 63-year-old man from Middlesex has been sentenced to five years in prison for sexually abusing a young girl in 2014.

Douglas Reader, formerly of Ferndale Road, Enfield, denied sexual assault on a child and possession of an indecent image, relating to an offence in Greenhithe in 2014.

Sky TV star gives lecture

AWARD-winning Sky News journalist Faisal Islam will deliver the University of Kent's annual Bob Friend Memorial Lecture at the refurbished Royal Dockyard Church at the Historic Dockyard in Chatham on Thursday, March 3.

The event is an annual event in the name of the original Sky News anchor.

A2 disruption continues

WORK continues to improve work on the A2 between Bean and Ebbsfleet.

The coastbound carriageway between the exit slip road at Bean and the B259 entry slip road at Ebbsfleet will be closed between 9pm and 5am, from Monday for four nights.



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Top Three Stories



1. Strangled to death

Danny Wallis' cousin dumped him in bath

2. Five years for pervert

Douglas Reader, 63, abused a young girl

3. Arson in Folkestone

Crews tackled a blaze at a derelict building

The Essential Guide:



...to Manston Airport

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FEATURED PHOTO GALLERY: Memories of the Biggin Hill International Air Fair have been recorded in a new book. See pages 28 and 29 for the full story and more images.

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Top Three Blogs



1. Inconsiderate motorists

Why they drive us round the bend

2. Rehabilitation reform

Prisons take a step in the right direction

3. Don't Tell The Bride

One of the KoS team's guilty pleasures

Results of the KoS Online Poll

Would you buy 'wonky' vegetables?

- 1 Yes, at any price - 67%
- 2 Yes, but only if it was cheap - 22%
- 3 No - 0%
- 4 Eugh, veg?! - 11%



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Where are friends who saved my life?

Alan Whiting nearly drowned 60 years ago but was saved by pals he is now keen to contact again

By Luke May

luke.may@archant.co.uk

A MAIDSTONE man is searching for two long-lost friends who saved his life on the Kent coast nearly 60 years ago.

Alan Whiting, 69, is searching for two twins who saved his and his friend's life on St Mary's Bay in 1957.

The two boys were on a camping trip aged 11 when they visited the Kent coast near Dymchurch.

Mr Whiting explained: "There were about 20 of us on the beach and two of us wandered off.

"The sea along the beach is very shallow until you get

right out; we were away from the main group when I saw the boy I was with fall in.

"He was slightly ahead of me and I thought I'm taller than him so I'll get over there and help him.

"Before I knew it we were both spluttering and falling under the waves.

"There were only two people supervising our group; it couldn't happen as easily nowadays.

"These twins who were part of our group saw me waving, about 50 yards from where we were.

"They came over and pulled Bernard, the boy who was with me, from the water and took him back to shore."

But the twins did not realise that the 11-year-old would also need saving.

"One of them turned around and saw me still waving, and the next thing I knew I was waking up back at the camp with my family there."

After saving their lives, Mr Whiting's parents promised to buy the boys a present as thanks.

They returned to the family home in Welling and took the boys shopping along the high street, where they picked out a guinea pig and cage.

Mr Whiting joked: "I often said to my parents that's what my life was worth, a guinea pig and a cage."

But the boys all lost contact as they headed in to secondary school, and Mr Whiting moved away from Welling with his family.

He has only recently started searching for the boys again, after making contact with Bernard, while re-searching online.

Now the pensioner is searching for the twins, named Barry and David Brooks.

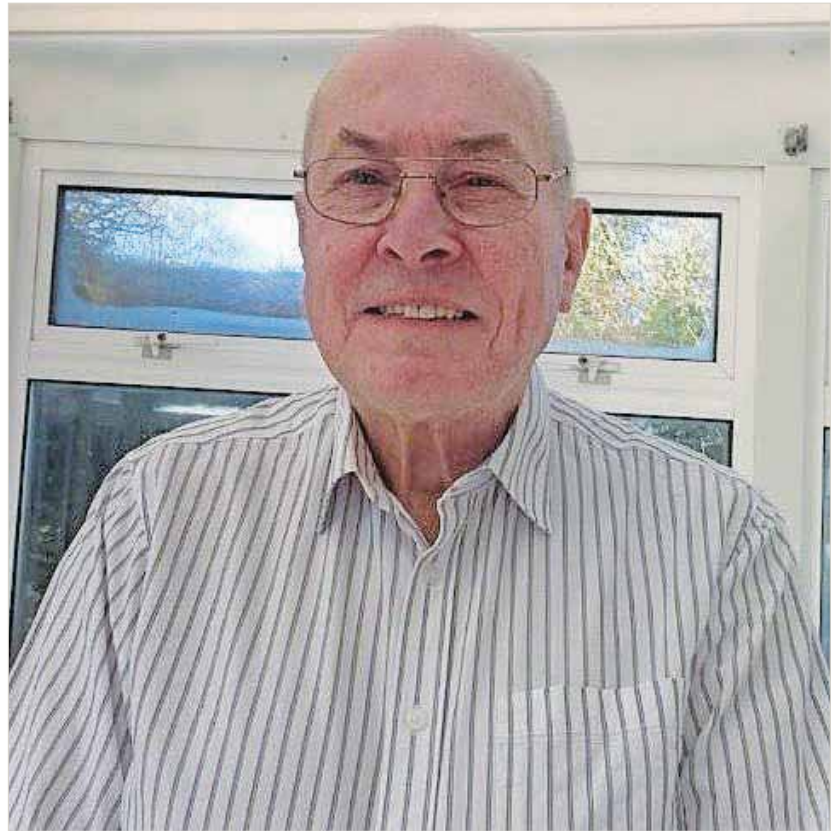
So far the only record of the twins Mr Whiting has found was an obituary for their late mother in Fareham, near Portsmouth from 2008.

He said: "Me and Bernard started talking again online a few months ago, we met up and he said, 'wouldn't it be nice to talk to them now'.

"At the time we didn't really think about it, when you're young you tend to get on with things and there was all sorts happening.

"It would be nice to hear their version of events and just to meet up with them for a chat and thank them again."

■ Anyone who can help Mr Whiting get back in touch with either of the twins is asked to call 01622 746171.



SAVED: Alan Whiting, searching for his old friends



SEARCH: Twins Barry and David Brooks

Strictly's Len waltzes into Margate

STRICTLY Come Dancing star Len Goodman returns to television screens on Wednesday with his new show - with much of it filmed in Margate.

Hosted by the Dartford dance judge, each episode of Holiday of my Lifetime revives the childhood summer holiday of a celebrity guest.

On Wednesday, February 24 on BBC1 at 3.45pm, Mr Goodman takes journalist Eve Polard back to the 1950s in Mar-

kentnews.co.uk kent-life.co.uk

gate to relive nostalgic snippets of her favourite British summer holiday as a girl.

One of the areas featured is Dreamland - a popular site back in the 1950s and now reopened.

The show will explore Margate's holidaying history mixing archive footage with insights from local historians and fellow holiday goers.

Cabinet member for corporate governance services,

Derek Crow-Brown, said: "Margate has a colourful history as a popular holiday destination for the British public and I'm sure this episode will evoke fond memories for many people near and far.

"The 1950s was a booming time for Britain and of course, Margate with its wonderful attractions such as the beautiful coastline and Dreamland which continue to charm residents and visitors today."

East

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MANSTON: The airport closed in 2014, and site owners want to turn it into a development park, but several groups have been campaigning for it to return as a functioning airport

Campaigners sceptical as three parties submit Manston interest

North Thanet MP Sir Roger Gale still wants to see American firm RiverOak take control of the site

NEWs that three parties have stepped forward to declare interest in the purchase of Manston Airport has been met with mixed reviews.

Despite the site being sold to developers, efforts to persuade the council to serve a compulsory purchase order (CPO) on the site have continued ever since.

A CPO is a power given to local authorities to force the purchase of certain areas if it can be justified to be in the greater public interest, as has been the case with the Paramount Park plans in north Kent.

However, efforts by American investment firm RiverOak to partner with the council eventually failed to take off after the council said it had failed to get the assurances and details which were essential for any such move to go ahead.

Thus, the airport remains shut and the prospect of flights returning look less likely by the day.

But campaigners have refused to give up.

A Prior Information Notice (PIN) calling for expressions of interest was published in the Office Journal of the European Union (OJEU) on Friday, January 15, before five expressions of interest were made before the council's deadline of Tuesday, February 9.

The interested parties then had until Friday, February 12 to submit responses to a follow up questionnaire, which were posed to operators in the market to establish the extent of their interest, capacity and capability.

The council has confirmed that of

those five, a total of three valid submissions were received, and the findings are to be reported to the cabinet, which next meets on Thursday, March 3.

The submissions will now go through an appraisal process which will commence from Tuesday, with a future timetable yet to be finalised.

Manston has been sold since it closed as an airport in 2014 to the team behind the Discovery Park in Sandwich who have outlined ambitious proposals to build residential, leisure and commercial development, operating under the name Stone Hill Park.

However, campaign groups have long wanted the site to reopen as a functioning airport, as promised by Ukup prior to its surprise victory in last year's local council election.

The ongoing complications have since meant a number of the party's councillors have defected in protest - losing Ukup its majority in the Thanet council chamber.

Campaign group Support Manston Airport were buoyed by the developments. A spokesperson said: "As expected, this shows a significant level of interest in the future of Manston Airport. Party names will continue to be confidential at this stage, but the SuMA team welcomes this announcement as great news for the campaign and another step forward."

However, the news was met with scepticism, as chairman of rival campaign group, the Save Manston Airport association (SMA), Dr Beau Webber, explained.

He said: "We still retain reserva-

“ It underscores what we have been saying all along, and that is a need and desire to see planes flying at Manston once again, so it's a worthwhile exercise ”

Sir Roger Gale,
North Thanet MP

tions as to whether the current search for an indemnity partner is being carried out with a genuine desire to succeed in saving the airport, or as an exercise intended to fail to give politicians a way of saying that they tried to honour their election promise to restore Manston as an airport.

"SMA are here to save Manston, not to promote the interests of any one particular interested party.

"However, RiverOak, who are maintaining their interest in taking Manston over by way of a Development Consent Order (DCO) through central government, have shared sufficient of their plans for Manston and the partners that they are involving to believe that they, if successful in the DCO, will run a successful and thriving airport to the benefit of the whole area.

"This gives us a good benchmark to measure TDC's CPO applicants

against. We hear that it may be as much as two months before we are told the names of the potential indemnity partners.

"When their names are known to us rest assured that we will carry out our own due diligence exercise, with great thoroughness, but with an open mind to make sure that we support the best chance of Manston reopening as a thriving, viable airport."

Similarly, Conservative MP for North Thanet, Sir Roger Gale, who has long supported the option of reopening Manston as an airport, admitted he was "cautiously cynical" at the news, and insisted that RiverOak was still looking the most favourable party to take over the site.

He told KoS: "We've been told before by Chris Wells [leader of TDC] that there are people interested and that turned out to be an exaggeration. However, this time it appears to be in writing so we hope these are real investors.

"What it underscores is what we have been saying all along, and that is a need and desire to see planes flying at Manston Airport once again, so it's a worthwhile exercise.

"But for me the best show in town is still RiverOak.

"I've been approached during this soft market testing exercise by a few people who say they've got 'great ideas' and want me to help back them to make them happen, but it's not my job to finance an airport.

"These people are expressing interest but not of any substance, unlike RiverOak, who have stuck with this to my total astonishment.

"I would have said 'to the hell with it' a long time ago.

"They've stuck with us and I've stuck with them.

"If someone else can help take us forward, then so be it, but we've seen no evidence of that so far."

The owners at Stone Hill Park plan to completely redevelop the site, introducing new homes, a business park focused on advance manufacturing, as well as sport and leisure facilities and open space.

They suggest upwards of 4,000 jobs could be created from the business park development alone, with 2,500 homes planned to be delivered, and the option to build more if deemed necessary.

They tweeted: "We have been consistent from the start about the core elements of our proposed scheme for the former airport.

"We will also be delivering on our promise to honour the history of Manston linked to the site's two museums, and retaining key features."

Public consultation events where the plans will be exhibited have been scheduled for March 15 at Pegwell Bay Hotel, and March 16 at Holiday Inn Express Ramsgate in Minster.

Sir Roger, who was supported in his bid to see the airport reopen at the end of last year by the transport secretary, Patrick McLoughlin, added: "It's all very well saying you're going to build lots of houses, but you need jobs so that people can afford to live in them."

■ What do you think? Share your views and join the debate: Email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

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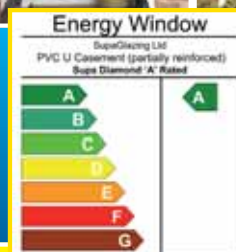
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Half a million join fight for meningitis jab for all children

The shocking images of Maidstone two-year-old Faye Burdett, who died last Sunday, prompted a huge response as an appeal went viral on social media to back a petition for a wider vaccination programme and raise funds

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

MORE than 500,000 people have signed a petition calling for a change in meningitis policy - and it keeps rising.

It comes after Faye Burdett, a two-year-old girl from Maidstone, died on Valentine's Day after losing a short battle with the infection.

Family and friends are now trying to raise awareness of the disease, with current government policy stipulating only newborn babies are eligible for a vaccination.

Faye's family said they are enduring "a pain you cannot describe" after the toddler contracted meningitis B.

A vaccine to protect against meningitis B is available on the NHS for babies aged two months, followed by a second dose at four months and a booster at 12

months.

Parents who wish to have older children vaccinated must pay privately, although a worldwide shortage of the vaccine Bexsero means stocks are very low.

Manufacturer Glaxo-SmithKline (GSK) hopes to have increased stocks in the UK by the summer. The NHS programme is unaffected.

Mrs Burdett has published photos of her daughter, including one of her in a hospital bed just before she died.

She said: "Faye was taken to A&E with a rash on her forehead. She was then transferred by South Bank Retrieval Service to Evelina Children's Hospital, where her heart stopped in the ambulance.

"We were given a one per cent survival chance but she proved them wrong and carried on fighting.

"After a few days she seemed to have turned a corner, but the sepsis started to affect her more and the decision of limb removal was

made. The extent of removal was massive, full leg amputation and one arm and plastic surgery.

"She was getting tired, her little body consumed by meningitis and sepsis (blood poisoning). We had to make the decision, a massive operation and she may die or we let her go peacefully on her own accord.

"We decided the latter and then watched our little girl slip away. At 9pm on February 14 she finally fell asleep forever. All this in only 11 days."

Mrs Burdett called on people to sign the petition asking the government for the meningitis B vaccine to be given to all children, not just newborn babies.

"All children are at risk from this terrible infection," she said. "There needs to be a rollout programme to vaccinate all children, at least up to age 11."

Sue Davie, chief executive of Meningitis Now, said: "Our heartfelt sympathies

WHAT IS MENINGITIS AND SEPTICAEMIA?

MENINGITIS is the inflammation of the lining around the brain and spinal cord.

Septicaemia is the blood poisoning form of the disease.

The two forms of the disease have different symptoms. People who recover from meningitis and septicaemia may be left with a range of after effects that dramatically alter their lives.

Meningitis is usually bacterial or viral, and occasionally is due to fungal infections, although almost any microbe can cause it.

Viral meningitis can be very unpleasant but it is al-

most never life threatening and most people quickly make a full recovery.

Bacterial meningitis is more serious and can be caused by a range of different bacteria.

Most cases in the UK and Ireland are caused by meningococcal bacteria.

Meningococcal bacteria can cause meningitis, septicaemia or both. Most people who get the disease have some symptoms of both meningococcal meningitis and meningococcal septicaemia; together these two forms of the disease are

known as meningococcal disease.

Septicaemia is the more life threatening form of the disease and is more dangerous when there are no signs of meningitis.

Other major forms of bacterial meningitis are: Pneumococcal and haemophilus influenzae b (Hib). Bacterial forms that mostly, though not exclusively, affect newborn babies are: Group B Streptococcal (GBS); E.coli and listeria.

Source: Meningitis Research Foundation (www.meningitis.org.uk).



DEVASTATED: The parents of Faye released this shocking 'before and after' image of their daughter after meningitis took hold of her little body.

go out to Faye's family and friends - they know we are here to support them in any way we can.

"We are using our voice to support the petition to raise the profile of meningitis, keeping it high on the political agenda and increasing awareness among the public to prevent more lives being lost to this devastating disease.

"Although the introduction of the Men B vaccine on the childhood immunisation scheme for young babies was a momentous achievement, saving thousands of lives, there are still so many, like Faye, left unprotected.

"Moving forward, we continue to campaign to see the Men B vaccine rolled out, particularly to at-risk

groups, to ensure a future where no one in the UK loses their life to meningitis."

Speaking to KoS this week, family friend Jody Cox, an accountant who lives in Kent Avenue, Maidstone, said the family were struggling to cope with the loss.

Once a petition reaches 100,000 signatures it has to be considered by

Parliament.

She said: "It's harrowing because until a couple of weeks ago Faye was just her usual self.

"I didn't hear from Jenny until the Monday morning when she told me that Faye had passed away," said Ms Cox, a pregnant mother herself.

"What kind of a decision is that for a parent to make, on Valentine's Day

of all days? I can't even imagine how difficult it must have been and how brave they had to be. You just don't think it could ever happen to your little girl."

The petition has gone viral this week, and blitzed family and friends' initial target of 10,000 signatures.

"It shows how many people care and hopefully it will make those in Parliament reconsider," Ms Cox added

"How can you have a cut-off age for things like this?

"A parent being restricted from protecting their child, in this day and age, is crazy.

"Half a million signatures means it can't be ignored."

Helen Grant, Conservative MP for Maidstone and The Weald, says she will meet with public health minister Jane Ellison next week to discuss it further.

She said: "I was incredibly saddened to read of this news.

"It is hard to imagine what the Burdett family are feeling at this time but the tragic nature of this case has resonated with so many of us and as a mother and grandmother, with myself.

Continued on page 16

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Continued from page 15

"I have urgently written this week to the Department of Health to ask for their reasoning behind the policy of meningitis B vaccinations for new-borns only."

The parents have subsequently thanked those that signed the petition in an "overwhelming" response.

They said: "We thought long and hard about the release of Faye's pictures but we as a family who have been through the devastation of meningitis feel all children should be able to get protected from this cruel disease that took our daughter."

"It's not just about Faye's death but also about the maiming of children that do survive the disease, it is life changing for the child and it's family, prevention must better."

VACCINES RIGHT NOW

FOR decades, MenB has been the most common cause of bacterial meningitis in the UK and Ireland.

Today, meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia remain the leading infectious cause of death for children under five in the UK.

Vaccines are the only way to prevent meningitis and have almost eliminated some other causes of this deadly disease. Since the first meningitis vaccine was introduced against Hib meningitis in 1992, many kinds of meningitis have been reduced or have dwindled to a mere handful of cases, including Hib, MenC and pneumo-

coccal.

In the UK, as of September last year, babies born on or after July 1 2015, are offered the MenB (meningococcal group B) vaccine as part of the routine immunisation schedule and babies born on or after May 1 are being offered the vaccine as part of a one off catch-up campaign.

The vaccine is available free of charge to people in the UK and Ireland with medical conditions that increase their risk of the disease.

Stocks of the vaccine are also available privately in the UK and Ireland, so people who are not en-

titled to the vaccine on the NHS can get it if they pay for it.

The effectiveness of a vaccine is determined by many things, including how strong an immune response it produces (its 'immunogenicity'), and how widely it covers disease-causing strains circulating in the country.

Results from the vaccine trials are very encouraging, showing that the vaccine triggers a strong immune response in infants, toddlers and adolescents.

Studies looking at how well circulating MenB strains match the vaccine have predicted that it will

cover approximately 88 per cent of MenB circulating in the UK, and 78 per cent of MenB in Europe overall.

The actual proportion of cases prevented will depend on other things too, including how widely the vaccine is offered and taken up, whether it prevents the bacteria from being carried and passed on as well as protecting from disease, how long protection lasts, and whether it works sufficiently well in all age groups.

Source: Meningitis Research Foundation (www.meningitis-ist.org.uk).



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

BACTERIAL meningitis is more serious than viral meningitis. The symptoms usually begin suddenly and get worse rapidly.

If you suspect bacterial meningitis, dial 999 immediately and ask for an ambulance.

Babies and young children under five years of age are most at risk of developing bacterial meningitis. They may have a high fever, with cold hands and feet, vomit and refuse to feed, feel agitated and not want to be picked up, become drowsy, floppy and unresponsive, grunt or breathe rapidly, have an unusual high-pitched or moaning cry, have pale, blotchy skin, and a red rash that doesn't fade when a glass is

rolled over it.

They have a tense, bulging soft spot on their head (fontanelle), have a stiff neck and dislike bright lights, or have convulsions or seizures.

The above symptoms can appear in any order, and some may not appear at all.

The rash can be harder to see on dark skin, in which case check for spots on paler areas like the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, on the tummy, inside the eyelids and on the roof of the mouth.

However, don't wait for a rash to develop. If your child is unwell and getting worse, seek medical help immediately.

In older children, teenagers

and adults, the symptoms of meningitis can include similar symptoms as above, plus drowsiness and difficulty waking up, severe muscle pain, pale blotchy skin, a distinctive rash, severe headache, sensitivity to light or a stiff neck.

Again, these symptoms can appear in any order, and not everyone will get all of them.

Most people with viral meningitis will have mild flu-like symptoms, such as: headaches, fever, generally not feeling very well and in more severe cases, neck stiffness and muscle or joint pain.

Unlike bacterial meningitis, viral meningitis doesn't usually lead to septicaemia (blood poisoning).

Source: NHS Choices

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VICTIM: Steve Dymond and his wife Su Gorman at their home in Broadstairs. They continue to fight for justice

Seven years on from vital report victims of scandal still seething

CAMPAIGN: As part of our on-going fight to raise awareness of the blood contamination scandal, we reflect on just what has happened since the publication of 2009's Archer Report raised vital questions

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

SOME two years after being commissioned, an independent inquiry published its findings on one of the most remarkable health scandals of the 20th century in this country.

The Archer Report, as it became known, described it as "an horrific human tragedy". The failure of government and medical experts to realise the problem fiercely criticised.

Yet seven years on from its publication, those infected by using NHS-prescribed contaminated blood products continue to seek justice and, perhaps most importantly, a voice.

The scale of the issue is remarkable and, for the uninitiated, remains hard to comprehend.

It involves the treatment of haemophiliacs from the 1970s to early 1990s.

Haemophilia is a condition sufferers are born with and sees their blood fail to clot in the normal way. Depending on the severity of the condition, it means any situation where

blood loss was likely could prove extremely hazardous - even fatal - to their health.

As a consequence, blood products were created which allowed haemophiliacs to temporarily allow their blood to clot.

Among the most popular was what was known as Factor VIII. Concentrated Factor VIII was more efficient and less onerous as a treatment for haemophiliacs. The demand was such that pharmaceutical companies rushed to obtain the blood needed. It sourced blood from a variety of donors and, when injected by the haemophiliac, would allow them, for example, to visit a dentist and not be concerned they would bleed uncontrollably.

So for years children and adults alike received this treatment from the NHS, on the assumption all the necessary checks and precautions were in place.

It would be a flaw which would cost thousands of them their lives.

Because the blood used in those products was being sourced in a way unthinkable of in today's society. And perhaps equally as unthinkable even then.



COMPENSATION: Will those affected every get a fair payment?

Donors included prisoners, drug addicts and the homeless; often from the US but the UK too.

The consequence? Blood infected with what would become known as hepatitis C - an illness which attacks the liver and is synonymous with drug users. And HIV - which only recently, courtesy of medical advances, has not come with an inevitable death sentence.

Approximately 7,500 per infected. Some 4,670 haemophiliacs were in-

fectured with hepatitis C and, out of that number, 1,200 also contracted HIV. More than 2,000 have subsequently died.

Many others have been plagued with health problems ever since. Conditions and fears which have devastated relationships, prevented them from having children, scuppered careers.

Since the discovery of what happened, they have been united in calling for justice - demanding both a

suitable level of compensation for the impact on their health, a full inquiry into the scandal and that the authorities acknowledge what they did and steps taken to ensure it can never happen again.

They have, so far, had very little to cheer about.

Prime minister David Cameron apologised - the first time 'sorry' has been uttered through official channels - last year and promised a review of the situation. A long-awaited announcement on the consultation into additional funding was promised through much of last year and finally was announced last month.

However, many still feel aggrieved at the level of compensation pay outs.

Some, unable to work due to ill health, receive less than £15,000 a year on which to survive and support their dependants.

Even with millions of extra pounds promised that sum will rise just by hundreds of pounds in most cases. Most feel a lump sum to give them much needed financial security is needed.

But the Archer Report, seven years

■ Continued on page 21

MP: I WILL CONTINUE TO DEMAND JUSTICE

THANET South MP Craig Mackinlay, in whose constituency Steve Dymond lives, has become involved in the battle - even mentioning both their plight and Kent on Sunday's ongoing campaign for justice in the House of Commons. In a special article written for us this week, he gives his take on the scandal.

EVERY so often in the midst of the political debate that dominates Westminster a constituent contacts me with a case of such abject injustice that it immediately jumps out.

Perhaps the most tragic case I've seen since I took office was that of Steve Dymond and his wife Su Gorman. Steve, who suffers personally from the dreadful consequences of the contaminated bloods scandal, told me about the impact it has on his day-to-day life.

Victims, like Steve, received contaminated blood when being treated for haemophilia. They are among around 7,500 people who were infected with hepatitis C or HIV in the 1970s and 80s as a result of treatment with blood products provided by the NHS.

The contaminated blood products were imported by the government from the USA. The victims have been denied the real financial security and the health and social care that they deserve. They have waited a long time for



FIGHTING: Tory MP Craig Mackinlay continues to fight for his constituents

proper compensation and access to drugs that are currently being assessed by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Support is currently only partial and does not offer the full settlement that those families affected need to live with dignity.

The government has assured MPs that it is considering the provision of future-proof financial assistance, and other support for victims. Last month, the government finally announced its long-promised consultation to help develop the shape and structure

of any new scheme. This consultation runs until April 15. The government also increased the amount of money being offered for those affected by an additional £100 million, taking the total to £225m over the five years to 2020. Following Steve and Su's

representations to me, I wrote to the minister for public health, Jane Ellison, several times on their behalf.

Such was the seriousness of this case I raised it directly with the minister on the floor of the House of Commons. Praising the Kent on Sunday for their dedication to this story I asked the minister to "assure me that those advanced new treatments will be available to all sufferers without restrictions?"

I was heartened to learn that the minister was fully aware of Steve's case. The recognition of this scandal is in large part to down to Steve and Su's continued efforts as strong champions on the issue.

On the new generation of drug treatments, NICE approved three new treatments in November, while NHS England announced last year that it had made £190m available for patients with cirrhosis from hepatitis C. The government estimates that around 550 affected people can now access the new treatments under the NHS's interim policies. Medical advances continue with beneficial new treatments being advanced for liver damage. These may prove the salvation for many, but it is early days in this pioneering field of research.

Until we see full, fair and final recognition for the victims of this scandal, including families like Steve and Su, I will continue to raise this at the highest levels of government and demand justice.

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■ Continued from page 19

ago, promised so much - yet ultimately has led to so little.

It was February 2007 that Lord Morris of Manchester, the long term president of the Haemophilia Society, established an independent public inquiry.

It was chaired by Lord Archer of Sandwell - a Labour life peer and former solicitor general who died in 2012. Privately funded - to the tune of £75,000 - the report's terms of reference for the inquiry were: "To investigate the circumstances surrounding the supply to patients of contaminated blood and blood products; its consequences for the haemophilia community and others affected; and suggest further steps to address both their problems and needs and those of bereaved families."

Its findings were certainly significant.

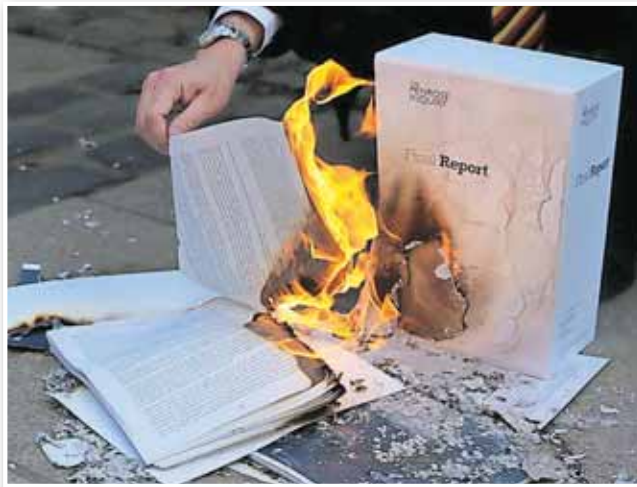
Describing it as a "horrific human tragedy" it added "subsequent events have done little to alleviate the hurt of the victims or their families".

It said it was "dismayed at the time taken by governmental and scientific agencies to become fully alive to the dangers of hepatitis C and HIV infections and by the lethargic progress towards self-sufficiency in blood products in England and Wales".

It added: "...the authorities may have been aware that some patients had been tested for hepatitis C with positive results of which they had not been informed by their doctors".

It ran to more than 100 pages and made a series of recommendations

Steve Dymond, 59, from Broadstairs, is a haemophiliac who was



ANGER: Campaigners burned copies of the Penrose Report

treated with Factor VIII when he was younger. He was infected with hepatitis C which over the years impacted on his liver to such an extent it sparked cancer cells for which he is currently undergoing treatment. A former teacher who even wrote the first GCSE exam papers for Russian, the toll on his health shattered his career and prevented he and his wife, Su, from having children.

He told KoS: "Successive governments have always refused a full public inquiry with statutory force to compel evidence to be given and documents released and with legally binding and enforceable recommendations.

"This persistent refusal inevitably provokes suspicions that there is much to be covered up and that wide

scale wrongdoing at many levels exists or existed. A point Lord Archer makes eloquently."

In response to the Archer Report, the government said: "This government acknowledges and deeply regrets the tragic outcome for many patients and their families, who have suffered as a result of the very treatments which should have transformed their lives for the better.

"Efforts to make properly-informed assessments of the relevant events and decisions taken throughout the period in question are constrained by the incompleteness of the documentary record, for which this and former governments have apologised.

"We acknowledge that the loss or misplacement of some official documents has led to suspicion that we

have 'something to hide'. We have been very open about these mistakes, and have made every effort to collect and release the relevant papers. We have said where we identify any further relevant documents, they will also be released, subject to safeguards such as not releasing personal data."

Explains Mr Dymond: "Hopes were raised when respected public figures looked into the murky and shameful circumstances that led to this scandal. Could this Inquiry bring decent support at last for victims and their families?"

"The findings evoked real fears at the extent of the devastation of high risk treatments being deliberately visited on so many. Horror to learn the NHS continued to supply contaminated Factor VIII knowingly and that drug company profits were considered more important than patient safety.

"And finally dismay that the government ignored recommendations and a clear structure for compensation and support, despite being told by the High Court they had no legal basis to do so."

It took another six years for a statutory and legally binding inquiry to publish its report in March 2015. The Penrose report was extensive but victims were left, once again, feeling as though they were being ignored.

It only applied to the situation in Scotland and its powers to summon witnesses did not extend south of the border - thus ruling out any senior English health officials. Costing £12million it was what prompted David Cameron's apology.

Yet it provided just one key recommendation - that people should get

tested for hepatitis C - and so many questions remained unanswered.

Adds Mr Dymond: "After so many years in the making, a costly and time consuming prevarication to avoid those responsible from facing responsibility for the devastation of so many innocent lives. A golden opportunity perverted into a toothless response and a very cosy sofa for the Department of Health to hide behind."

All of which leads us to today. Seven years on from Archer and despite some false dawns, those whose lives were turned upside down by health failings are still having to apply for funds, and very little at that.

Health minister Jane Ellison's latest announcements of addressing the issue have been dismissed by campaigners "as a pile of spin".

Concludes Mr Dymond: "The highest and most noble calling for the state is the protection and care of all its citizens.

"For over 30 years, Whitehall and the political class have fallen woefully short in taking responsibility and making equitable redress for their cavalier approach to the scandal of contaminated blood and to all those affected.

"It does them considerable disservice.

"Jane Ellison's bad faith proposals are but the latest example in a long litany of state indifference towards the victims and sufferers.

"The compensation solemnly pledged by the prime minister in the Commons on March 25 2015 is long overdue.

"Dying for your country is one thing, but dying because of your country is another."



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After Bafta triumph, can Mark Rylance scoop Academy Award?

He has won global praise for his work on the stage, but while the Kent-born actor has only rarely made film or TV his home, his performances continue to win him awards and nominations

By Chris Murphy

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

FOR patrons of the theatre, the name Mark Rylance has long stood as a by-word for world quality acting.

And now, it seems, his success treading the boards of the world's top productions is being reflected with his dalliances on the big screen.

Last Sunday he collected a Bafta for best supporting actor in Steven Spielberg's thriller *Bridge of Spies* and he's up in the same category at the ultimate movie night next Sunday - the 88th Academy Awards.

And few would be brave enough to lay money on him not walking away with the top prize - despite competition in the category from the likes of Tom Hardy, Christian Bale, Mark Ruffalo and even Sylvester Stallone.

But for an actor so synonymous with New York's Broadway and the London West End, few realise his Kentish roots.

He was born in Ashford on January



WINNER: Mark Rylance in Steven Spielberg's *Bridge of Spies* saw him collect the first part of a possible double last weekend

18, 1960 - to English teachers Anna and David Waters.

Born David Mark Rylance Waters, his family moved to the US just two years later, emigrating to Connecticut and then, seven years later, to Wisconsin.

He would go to be proclaimed the greatest actor of his generation, yet deliberately avoid the mainstream ce-

lebrity offered by cinema.

For the county's theatre elite, his success now is overdue.

Verne Sanderson, operation manager for Chatham's Central Theatre, said: "Mark Rylance's Bafta win is a great example of some of the great talent emerging from Kent. I wish him the very best for all future acting endeavours."

While director of Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre, Mark Everett is keeping his fingers crossed he will one day get to host the superstar, saying: "It's just a shame that his talent has yet to be seen on the stage of the Marlowe - we live in hope."

Not that he's been a stranger to the county. In 2014 he was in Kent to film scenes for the critically acclaimed

BBC TV drama *Wolf Hall* - alongside Homeland star Damian Lewis.

They filmed at Dover Castle and Penshurst Place, near Tonbridge.

Now aged 56, he launched his acting career at the University School of Milwaukee where his father taught.

In 1978 he returned to London to train with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (Rada) and eventually



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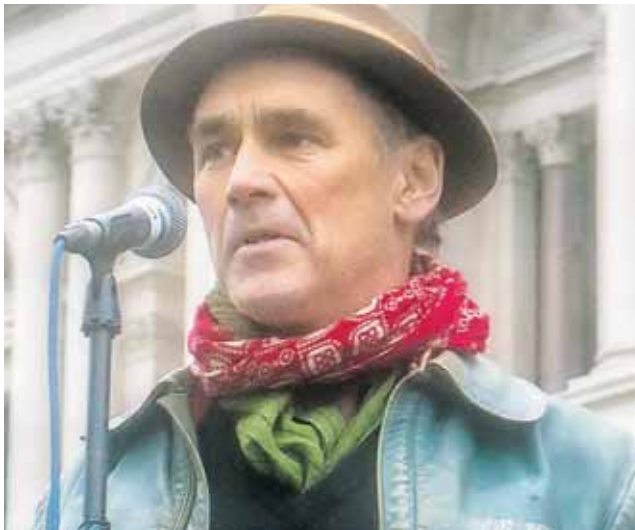


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CAMPAIGNER: Aside from acting and, inset right, a stint at the Globe Theatre as artistic director, he also has strong political opinions

joined the Royal Shakespeare Company when his reputation started to become established. He would go on to start winning a host of top theatre awards including an Olivier for best actor for *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1994.

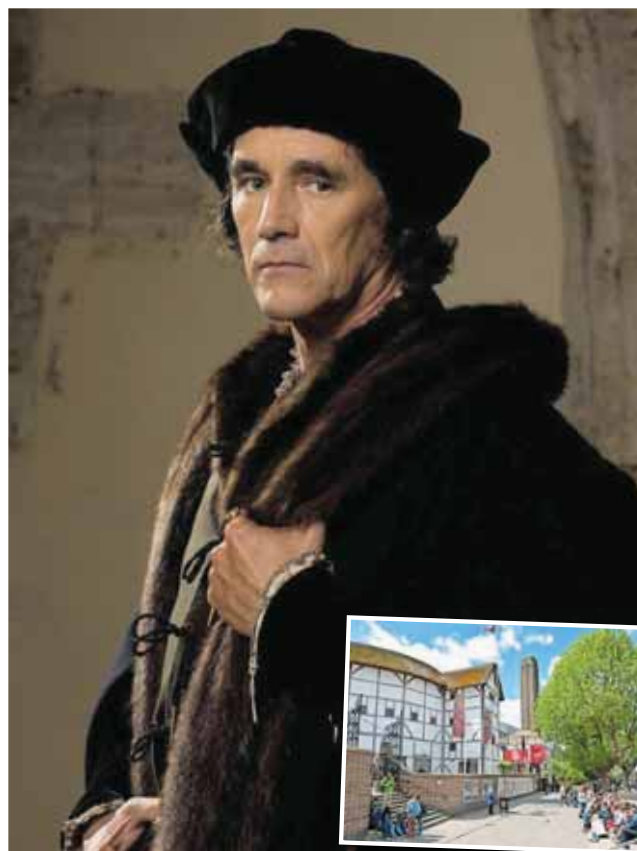
At 35, he became the first artistic director of Shakespeare's Globe in London, which he held for a decade.

During that time, in 1991, he also made his first film appearance in director Peter Greenaway's take on *Tempest*; *Prospero's Books*, and four years later in *Angels and Insects* alongside the likes of future Oscar nominee Kristin Scott-Thomas and Patsy Kensit.

In 2005 he won a British Academy Television Award for best actor for his role in *The Government Inspector* and continues to put stage first with carefully selected television and film work alongside it.

Indeed, his film and TV credits pale into insignificance compared to his lengthy theatre portfolio. He will, however, take his most mainstream role yet when he performs in the big screen version of Roald Dahl classic *The BFG* later this year.

Outside the world of entertainment, he is also well known as a major peace campaigner and recently spoke to protesters objecting to the start of a British bombing campaign



FILMING: In Wolf Hall he returned to Kent to shoot scenes in the county.

in Syria.

The actor has also supported Survival International for many years and was the creator and director of

We Are One, a fundraiser staged at the Apollo Theatre six years ago.

He is a patron of Peace Direct and The Outside Edge Theatre Company

which helps people affected by substance abuse.

Mr Rylance also backs more traditional theatrical causes by becoming a patron of the London International Festival of Theatre. He explained: "I feel Lift has done more to influence the growth and adventure of English theatre than any other organisation we have."

His life has not been without tragedy, however.

He met his wife - the director, composer and playwright Claire van Kampen in 1987 which working on a production at the National Theatre.

A little over two years later, the couple were married.

As a consequence, Mr Rylance became a stepfather to her two daughters from a previous marriage; actress Juliet Rylance and filmmaker Nataasha van Kampen.

However, in July 2012, Ms van Kampen died of a suspected brain haemorrhage as she flew back to the UK from New York. A desperate fight to save her life onboard took place but they were unable to save her. She died aged just 28.

As the terrible news sank in, Mr Rylance pulled out of his planned involvement in the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games. He had been due to recite a passage from *The Tempest*. His role was taken, instead, by Kenneth Branagh.

He is also about to open in a production of *Nice Fish* in Brooklyn, New York - which prevented him from appearing in person to collect his award last weekend. Instead Steven Spielberg did the honours on his behalf.

The 88th Academy Awards takes place in Los Angeles next Sunday.

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Influx of starter homes breathes new life into the housing market

While the average price of a home in the county continues to steadily rise, there are signs of some relief for those looking to get their foot onto the first rungs of the challenging property ladder

By Chris Murphy

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE average house price in the county now stands at a staggering £348,551 - up 10 per cent on this time last year.

And with the spring normally triggering a sharp increase in the number of properties going on sale - as many look to secure a summer move - estate agents are bracing themselves for another busy period.

House prices in February are already up 3.2 per cent on January in Kent - compared to the national rise of 2.9 per cent. The average national price is a record-breaking £299,287.

Yet while it means first-time buyers are faced with a greater challenge than ever before to get their foot on the bottom rung of the property ladder, for those looking to sell, it means they remain in the driving seat.

And with interest rates remaining rock bottom there is set to be a flurry of activity.

The seemingly perpetual rise in property prices could be down to an ever-increasing number of people going in to estate agents' offices - high street chain Rightmove says it has seen a 20 per cent rise in viewings with just five per cent more properties coming on to the market. Those figures are still up on the pre-recession stats from 2008.

Hotspots in the county remain Dartford and Medway which, according to the latest figures from the Halifax, have risen by around 16 per cent, behind Newham in London which saw a 22 per cent rise over the past year.

Martin Ellis is the housing economist at Halifax. He explained: "Those areas that have seen the biggest house price increases over the past year are either in outer London or within close commuting distance of the capital. Demand in these areas has risen as rapid house price rises in central London in the past few years have caused increasing numbers of people to look for property in more affordable areas. A few towns have experienced modest price falls. These areas are typically still suffering from relatively weak employment and economic conditions, which has dampened local housing demand."

Yet while the likes of Thanet have traditionally commanded lower prices than neighbouring areas, the ability to buy more bang for your buck is pushing up the prices, and demand, there too. It is fuelled by the revival in the likes of Margate, courtesy of the Turner Contemporary art gallery and the reimagined Dreamland.

Simon Woodcock is managing director of Robinson Michael & Jackson in Medway. He says the towns are seeing some positive and encouraging trends.



RISE: The spring normally sees a spike in the number of houses coming on to the market

He said: "Sales are up 12 cent this January compared to January 2015, reflecting the positive sentiment in our local market. Forty of our 153 sold properties in January went to first-time buyers, and we can only see a continuing surge in the number of first-time buyers entering the market, as more entry level homes and flats are being rebuffed by landlords."

"Buy-to-let investors are certainly feeling the effects of the forthcoming three per cent extra stamp duty charge and this means they're now overlooking homes that they would have previously snapped up. It's a positive side effect for first timers. Many parents are remortgaging to release equity from their own homes to pass on to their children - many of whom are struggling to save a decent

deposit."

Tom Ross-Bason, the associate operations manager at Ward and Partners, said: "Hotspots in Kent are Ashford, Dartford, Strood and Folkestone too for investors."

"The best selling house at present is the traditional three-bed semi. We had one in Ashford which sold in a week and as it was priced correctly had 26 viewings and 23 offers."

"It is certainly not a buyer's market at the moment. Some 27 per cent of our properties are currently selling at above the asking price."

Miles Shippside, Rightmove director and housing market analyst, said: "The new year's market has hit the ground running in many locations, continuing last year's momentum and resulting in the price of property

coming to the market hitting a new high. Many agents reported high numbers of sales in November and December and properties selling more quickly, so it's encouraging to see signs of replenishment of property, especially in the first-time buyer sector."

"However, in spite of the apparent veneer of market buoyancy, those thinking of putting their property up for sale need to avoid being too optimistic with their initial asking price, as most buyers are still understandably being very selective about their future home."

Even landlords are holding out the temptation to sell and cash in on rising prices. Mr Shippside added: "While more properties are coming to market there is little anecdotal

evidence of tax-shy landlords selling up."

It is not all doom and gloom for first time buyers. In fact, it seems many do have some extra cash in their pockets these days.

Mr Shippside said that is the sector which is seeing the highest volume of new properties coming to the market - the typical home being two beds or less. That is up 10 per cent this month, compared to last year.

He said: "For the second month running the highest increase in supply of homes coming to market is properties with two bedrooms or fewer, typically the target purchase of first-time buyers or buy-to-let investors."

He went on: "Regions outperforming the national average with over 10 per cent more newly-marketed homes with two bedrooms or fewer includes the south east."

"If this trend continues the increased competition among new sellers may help to temper price rises. More and more agents are reporting a healthy return in first-time buyer numbers, and with the cards increasingly stacked in their favour, 2016 could prove to be the year of the first-time buyer."

The time taken to sell a house has been creeping up since last spring. It was down to an average of 65 days in May, June and July, rising to 79 days over Christmas and New Year. That time should gradually fall once again as it traditionally does, so getting a property on the market sooner rather than later will cut down on waiting time for a buyer to come along.

The Halifax said other property types that have seen values dramatically increase are flats with an average rise of a staggering 60 per cent since 2005. All other properties went up by 38 per cent over the same period.

In cheaper areas in the North, a typical flat is £120,000 with London coming in at £370,000, putting Kent somewhere in between.

In Kent and the south east, semi-detached homes have risen the most in value across the UK, said the Halifax.

Martin Ellis, housing economist at Halifax, said: "Flats have recorded larger prices gains over the past ten years than any other property type."

He added there has been a far more significant increase in the number of first-time buyers over the past five years compared with the number moving home. This difference is reflected in a bigger rise in prices since 2010 for those property types - flats and terraces - that are most popular.

However, if you're struggling to afford a house it could be worse. In Chelsea, a single garage has just sold at auction for £360,000, which at 2,500 per sq/ft, is a fair bit higher than the average house price.

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Campaigners unite to battle tunnel plans

The village of Shorne became the focal point for those fighting to prevent a Thames crossing from being built east of Gravesend. **Tom Pyman** spoke to those involved of how they intend to team up.

HUNDREDS of people turned out for a village hall meeting with the goal to team up to fight the £5 billion plans to build a new Thames crossing east of Gravesend.

Some 300 attended Shorne Village Hall last Friday to oppose the government's plans to build a tunnel under the river to link with Essex.

And it is hoped it was the first in a series of meetings which will see one major organisation emerge under a united umbrella aimed at fighting the controversial plans.

Highways England, the government's transport agency, says it prefers that route to one in Dartford and earlier this month started an eight-week public consultation period.

The meeting was a unification of various campaign groups and parish councils in their fight against the so-called 'option C', which proposes building a bored tunnel east of Chalk, with a new road being built from junction one of the M2.

Among those present were representatives from Shorne Parish Council, Higham Parish Council, campaign group Abridge2Far, concerned residents from across local villages, and MP for Gravesham Adam Holloway, who gave what spectators described as a "rousing speech" in opposition to the plans.

There are fears that a crossing in this location

would devastate the environment and community, and not actually reduce the current problems experienced at the Dartford Crossing.

While nothing is set in stone as yet, discussions are ongoing to unite these groups and create one large body to tackle the problem head-on, with over 1,000 signatures already received on a petition asking the government to reconsider its options.

Robin Theobald, chairman of Shorne Parish Council, said: "All the seats were taken and we had over 50 people having to stand so it was a really great turnout."

"As soon as there is a threat to our community, you have to bring everyone together and that's what we're doing."

Bob Lane, from campaign group Abridge2Far, added: "Everybody is very unhappy about the proposals, and the fact it appears we have no choice, so it was important to come together because there are a number of different groups working towards the same goal."

Local residents were urged to make their voice heard during Highways England's on-going consultation, although many were unaware of the option to have their say.

"All the information is online, and while there are packs distributed to libraries, you can only really find out about it online," Mr Lane said.

"That makes things difficult for some of our residents who don't use computers, so it's definitely a flawed system, and unacceptable for people not to have all the information five weeks into an eight-week consultation."

"Therefore we're going door-to-door to make sure people know how they can have their say."

Gravesend resident Robert Standing was also at the meeting. He told KoS: "I don't think it will go ahead here."

"We know 'option A' at Dartford is still on the table and there's a lot of opposition to the plans here so hopefully we'll be heard."

"It'll take 10 years to build and even then will it fix all the problems?"

"In 25 years people will be demanding another crossing, and then another one in another 25 years, so when will it end?"

Highways England says that a new crossing is needed to reduce congestion at the existing Dartford Crossing, where earlier this month drivers were stuck in queues of over ten hours, and unlock economic growth, supporting the development of homes and jobs in the region.

It claims that a crossing in this location would provide double the economic benefit compared to an additional one at Dartford.

However, in the space of just a few weeks, the plans have proved controversial, with Gravesham councillor Bryan Sweetland resigning from his post in Kent County Council's cabinet in opposition to the proposals earlier this month.

The former cabinet member for commercial and trade services, claimed the plans would



READY: Shorne is set to put up a tough fight. All pictures: ELLIE HOSKINS

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cause "the worst devastation in the area since the last world war".

Similarly, land and property specialist firm, BTF Partnership, also slammed the proposals, claiming it would "blight farms, businesses, and cause misery for property owners," while the rural campaign group CPRE said that it will "ruin the beautiful landscapes and panoramic views which make Gravesham so special".

The Green Party in the county have also come out and described them as "short-sighted and flawed". Those in Dartford, however, have continually supported the plans.

Four more public exhibitions to help explain

East

the consultation process are set to take place next week.

The first is at Hurst Community Centre in Bexley on Monday, followed by further exhibitions at Eastgate Events Venue in Northfleet on Tuesday, Temple Hill Community Centre in Dartford on Friday and Orchard Shopping Centre in Dartford on Saturday.

The Highways England consultation closes on Thursday, March 24.

■ **What are your views on the crossing proposal? Join the debate and write to The Editor, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP. Or email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk. We'll feature a selection on our letters' page.**

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HOME: Paul Hollywood's Wingham house is available for £795,000.

Want a slice of Hollywood? Bake Off star puts village home on sale

Baker Paul Hollywood has put his house in Wingham, near Canterbury, on the market for £795,000

THEY say that you can clinch the sale of a property with the smell of freshly baked bread.

So you can imagine that selling the home of baker and TV star Paul Hollywood may well sell like the proverbial hotcakes.

However, you're going to need deep pockets should you want to follow in the footsteps of the judge in the Great British Bake Off.

After years spent in his family home in Wingham, near Canterbury, Mr Hollywood has put the house on the market - and it could be yours for £795,000.

But it is one packed full of history - and, of course, comes complete with its own fame. It has been featured a number of times in Mr Hollywood's

TV shows.

The 49-year-old has instructed the sale through estate agents Fine and Country.

A spokesman at the Canterbury office said: "I am only allowed to confirm we do have the house for sale, but can't share any more information, like how many people have been in touch about it."

The Old Canonry is described as one of the country's oldest private properties. Dating back to the 13th century, the medieval Grade I-listed building is thought to have the cobbled floor of its basement come from the original Roman road which led from the coast to the cathedral city.

There are oak beams, two inglenook fireplaces and 15th century arched leaded light windows. There

are even three staircases leading to the four bedrooms.

Of course, as might be expected, the kitchen is bang up to date with a range cooker.

Outside is a modest walled garden and decking. Plus of course an office and garage.

The Great British Bake Off judge has lived in the house for 12 years with wife Alexandra, who writes cookery books.

The agent's description of the property says: "There is a guest suite consisting of two double bedrooms and a shower room leading from a separate staircase and you reach the unique and impressive master bedroom with its crown post roof and vaulted beamed ceiling via another staircase.

"This leads to a Jack and Jill bath-

room and another large double bedroom but if you wanted to close it off, the second bedroom has yet another staircase down."

Mr Hollywood has recently campaigned to save the pub in the village, and when he is not baking, or appearing in a variety of TV shows, is a keen amateur racing driver.

He ran his own artisan baking business, based in Aylesham, which supplied upmarket stores such as Harrods and Waitrose. He was forced to shut up shop in 2013, however, as his TV career took off.

Hollywood was born into the culinary world - his grandfather head baker at Liverpool's Adelphi Hotel, and his parents ran a bakery in Cheshire.

His life could have been so different

- before jumping into the kitchen he studied sculpture.

Before leaving the UK for a stint in Cyprus, he was head baker at The Dorchester, Chester Grosvenor and Spa and the Cliveden Hotel.

But despite a powerful reputation for his bread products, it was in 2010 that he was catapulted into the limelight when he was selected to be one half of the judging panel on the BBC's Great British Bake Off.

He lined up alongside Mary Berry and was swiftly embraced by viewers.

The show's popularity saw it leap from BBC2 to primetime BBC1, and its final last year pulled in the nation's biggest television audience for 2015.

It is not known if Mr Hollywood intends to stay in the county.

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When Biggin Hill air show ruled the skies

Book looks back at the event which used to pull in 85,000 spectators each year and revolutionised the world of air fairs

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

MEMORIES of one of the world's best loved and longest-running air shows have been documented in a new book.

An ex-RAF airfield, it was already well-known as the site from which Spitfires and Hurricanes were launched during the Second World War, but grew in popularity as hundreds of aircraft were exhibited for over half a century.

During the late 1980s, in excess of 80,000 people would make the pilgrimage to the west Kent town to witness the giants of the sky close at hand.

Written by former Shortlands resident Paul Fiddian, *The History of The Biggin Hill International Air Fair* takes a flight down memory lane, revealing how the event inspired countless visitors to pursue a life in aviation.

For Mr Fiddian, 35, who attended



every year from 1984 until the show ended in 2010, it propelled him into a career in aviation journalism, before deciding to take on the challenge of his first entirely self-written book.

He said: "It's always been a personal thing because I'm mad about air shows, probably to an unhealthy de-

gree, and to have one just up the road from me was pretty special.

"When it was first introduced it was unique because there wasn't the concept of family shows, that everyone could attend and enjoy together.

"Many pilots have said that's where their love of flying really stemmed



SOARING: A stealth fighter, left, appears at the 2000 air show

from.

"I was devastated when it finished, and thought that it needed to be remembered in some way."

The fair attracted visitors from all over the world, with people reportedly travelling from as far as South Africa and New Zealand to enjoy the show.

However, it drew to a close six years ago, when barely a fortnight after that summer's air fair had ended, organisers announced that the con-

tract with Biggin Hill Airport, through which the shows had been staged, had been severed.

In its place has been the Festival of Flight, since 2014, which has failed to attract quite the same level of interest as its predecessor - primarily due to it being a far smaller scale event, with strictly limited numbers of tickets sold only in advance.

Typically when it comes to nostalgia, the earlier memories tend to be the fonder, yet for Mr Fiddian one of

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TEAM: A Virgin Atlantic 747 is joined by the Red Arrows during the 2009 show - one the author remembers fondly

his most treasured sights at the air fair actually came in 2009, which he says was indicative of the show's refusal to rest on its laurels, and ability to continue to shock and amaze with each passing year.

"Seeing the Red Arrows in formation with a Virgin Atlantic 747 was a real sight to behold," he said.

"The 747s were long part of the fabric of the show anyway but this was particularly spectacular.

"It summed up the work of the co-founder, Jock Maitland, who always tried to ensure there was something new and exciting each year.

"It was almost like a portal, because it had the ability to unlock your imagination, transport you back and evoke all kinds of memories.

"For some that meant stretching as far back as the Battle of Britain, so it was a really powerful event for a lot of people."



HUGE: Aerial view of the 1991 Biggin Hill event.. Picture: PETER R MARCH

WHY WAS THE AIR FAIR SUCH A HIT?

EXPLAINS Paul Fiddian in the book: "For almost half a century Biggin Hill Airport was the scens of one of the world's best-loved and longest-running air shows.

"Established as a showcase for the then blossoming air travel scene, the event grew beyond all recognition to join the upper echelons of the air display realm.

"In many ways, the air fair's sto-

ry is also that of the UK's post-war air display scene at large; such was the event's sheer longevity and depth of influence on other air shows conceived as family days out, with attractions beyond the scope of aviation.

"Often innovative, sometimes weather affected, and consistently of the highest calibre, the air fair was keenly attended by visitors

both from within Kent's borders and much further afield - and from its outset, inspired countless individuals to pursue a flying career."

The History of The Biggin Hill International Air Fair by Paul Fiddian is published by Fonthill Media. Priced £18.99. E-books are also available from the likes of Amazon, Apple and Google.


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Stars shine as cream of music crop head to Brits

Two former Kent university students are in the running to land some of the biggest prizes in the music industry

By Luke May

luke.may@archant.co.uk

NEXT week the best in British pop music will come together for the annual Brit Awards ceremony.

And this year, two former Kent students have received attention for the awards, with nominations in three

different categories.

Former University of Kent (pictured right) student turned international star Ellie Goulding has been nominated for two awards.

The 29-year-old has been nominated for her song Love Me Like You Do from the soundtrack of the movie Fifty Shades of Grey - based, coincidentally, on the book written by another form University of Kent student - EL James.

NOMINATED: Ellie Goulding could scoop top single award for Love Me Like You Do

The song has already picked up international attention, receiving a Golden Globe award nomination for best original song but losing out to Sam Smith's Writing On the Wall from the latest James Bond spy-flick, Spectre.

When released last February it flew up the charts and reached number one.

Miss Goulding also received a Grammy nomination for the song, for best pop solo performance, but lost out to fellow Brit Ed Sheeran.

Now her song is in the running to pick up the best British single award at a ceremony at the O2 Arena this Wednesday.

Not that Miss Goulding is any stranger to the Brit Awards. In 2010 she won the critics choice award and in 2014 picked up the best female artist gong.

The other Kentish representative in this year's Brit Awards is Charlie Andrew.



GAGA'S GRAMMYS BOWIE TRIBUTE

FOLLOWING on from the death of David Bowie last month, the music world continued to pay tribute to the former Beckenham hero.

Lady Gaga performed an emotional medley of the starman's hits to global audiences watching the Grammys - the US equivalent of the Brit Awards - on Monday.

Wearing a Ziggy Stardust outfit, she was joined onstage by Nile Rodgers - star of Chic and one of Bowie's former producers.

Bowie died on January 10 after an 18 month battle with cancer, just days after his 69th birthday, and the release of his final album, Blackstar.

The tributes will continue this week at the Brits with another star-studded line-up paying homage to his long, influential career.

Born in Brixton, Bowie grew up in Beckenham, when the now London borough of Bromley was part of Kent.

In 1969 he played a legendary



free festival at the Beckenham bandstand - just months before Space Oddity gave him his first major hit.

The bandstand at the Croydon Road Recreation Ground has since become synonymous with the artist, after he released a song about the performance called Memory of a Free Festival.

Following his death, Bromley Council announced it was looking to make the bandstand a "fitting tribute" to the former Plaistow Road resident, despite having an application for £302,100 worth of funding rejected by the Heritage Lottery Fund last year.

Deputy leader of Bromley Council, Colin Smith, said: "Our job locally now, in respect and recognition of the unique talent that once walked amongst us, is to redouble our own efforts to ensure that upon completion, the renovated Beckenham bandstand, which is so indelibly linked with David Bowie, becomes a fitting and enduring tribute to his memory."

Since then the fund has announced it would "welcome a new application" for the bandstand as it "recognised the importance of the bandstand in local people's memories of David Bowie".

However, since his death, Bromley Council has not made any renewed application.



Growing up in Kent and studying at the public Bethany School in Goudhurst, Mr Andrew has drawn attention as a music producer, working with acts such as Alt J and Madness.

He is also a key player in the running of Kent's secretive In the Woods festival put on every year in private

woodlands in the county.

The festival, which never reveals its address until a few days before it's on, has become a haven for upcoming talent, with previous performers including Tunbridge Wells duo Slaves.

Mr Andrews has already picked up the music producer Brit Award for this year, beating competition such as Mark Ronson.

Other categories at the award include the international group award, which sees Eagles of Death Metal, the band who were playing at the Bataclan theatre during the Paris attacks, nominated.

Elsewhere Amy Winehouse has been posthumously nominated for the British solo female artist award, five years on from her death.

Last year's event saw Madonna the big name performer although she won the headlines for the wrong reason when a cape she was wearing failed to untie and a dancer accidentally pulled her off the stage.

TOM SET TO ROCK THE FOREST



LEGENDARY performer Tom Jones is set to perform a major outdoor show in the county this summer.

The Welshman, best known for hits such as It's Not Unusual, Delilah, What's New Pussycat and Kiss, will be headlining at one night of the Forest Live shows at Bedebury Pinetum, near Tunbridge Wells.

The popular shows, promoted by the Forestry Commission, will be kicked off by the singer on June 17.

The following night is headlined

by a former TV colleague of the crooner.

The Kaiser Chiefs are fronted by Ricky Wilson - one of the judges on BBC's popular The Voice. Tom Jones was a judge up until the current series.

Tickets for the Kaiser Chiefs show on June 18 have already sold out. Tickets for the Tom Jones show are priced £48.50 and available by calling 03000 680400 or visiting www.forestry.gov.uk/music.

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County plays key role in a tense psychological crime book thriller

Deal author Simon Booker tells **Tom Pyman** how the county's weird and varied landscapes, and his voluntary work with offenders in prison, helped provide inspiration for his debut novel, *Without Trace*

THE mysterious landscape of Dungeness is the backdrop for a psychological thriller that investigates a miscarriage of justice.

Without Trace is the debut novel by Deal author, Simon Booker, and is set in a range of scenic, and in his eyes dramatic, locations across the county, particularly the coastal headland of Dungeness.

It's not the first time the area has been picked for artistic purposes. TV dramas and music acts such as *The Lighthouse Family* and *The Prodigy* have all filmed there over the years.

Speaking on why he chose this particular setting, Mr Booker told *KoS*: "I think Dungeness is incredibly beautiful and I love how it's sort of out-of-the-way.

"Its wonderfully posh houses and windswept, eerie landscape is the perfect setting for a thriller.

"The book is also set in Deal, which is one of my favourite places - a pretty, but proper working town - and Margate, too which is going under some fascinating regeneration.

"I'm a big fan of areas of Kent and I think it's a great place to set a novel.

"There's such a fantastic variety of stuff going on - whatever the story you can find a place in this county that suits it, and to set this particular book in Kent really helps it come off the page."

Without Trace follows the story of protagonist, Morgan Vine, and her childhood sweetheart Danny, who has been imprisoned for the murder and attempted rape of his 14-year-old step-daughter.

But Morgan obsesses for years in her belief that he is innocent and appears to be proved right when a key witness retracts his statement and Danny is released.

For a few sweet weeks it seems as if they can finally return to their old friendship, until Morgan's teenage daughter goes missing.

As the investigation proceeds she cannot escape the sick feeling in her stomach and the nagging voice in her head: did he do it?

The signs are there, as sea shells arranged outside her house and sand on her car bonnet spell out the words: Don't trust him.

Mr Booker, 60, has a unique, personal connection with miscarriages of justice, because of his ex-wife's marriage to an innocent man locked up her over two decades.

He said: "The book isn't inspired by that particular story but it's certainly where my interest in it stems.

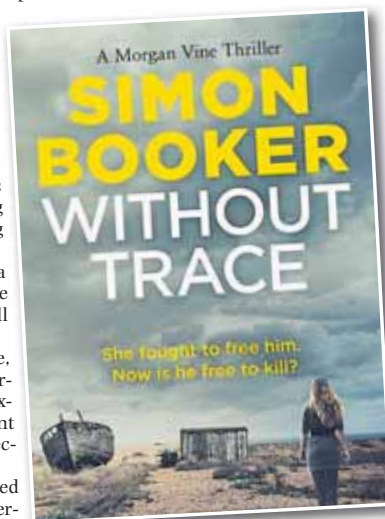
"My ex-wife read a story in the *LA Times* about this guy, Bruce Lisker, who was serving 26 years in prison for murdering a man.

"He was only 18 when he was sent down and insisted that he didn't do it, but the police ignored him.

kentnews.co.uk kent-life.co.uk



DUNGENESS: The distinctive coastal area is the setting for Simon Booker's novel, *Without Trace* - book cover below.



shine, the dolphins and the waves were a really beautiful contrast to what he must have had to go through in prison.

"He was awarded a £6.7m settlement but no amount of money can make up for those lost years."

Mr Booker, who splits his time between Stoke Newington and Deal, where he spends at least six months each year with his partner and fellow crime writer, MJ McGrath, saw his obsession develop further over the years.

He began volunteering with Belong London, a charity that trains facilitators to help set up meetings between victims and offenders in Brixton Prison as part of restorative justice.

He also organises reading groups and draws upon his experiences in his writing, as he explains: "I've got a keen interest in this kind of thing.

"It seems to me that if you're writing a series that isn't about a detective you need to have a peg to hang each story on and in this it's different miscarriages of justice.

"I didn't contact Bruce for investigative purposes for this book, but

East

rather the research process was based on time that I spend in prisons, doing reading groups and my work as a facilitator of restorative justice.

"I sit down and talk to these offenders in prison, and if they are amenable, we try and contact the victim, say of a burglary, for example.

"I get them to talk and, where appropriate, bring them together, either face-to-face or through letters so they can talk about the effect it has had on their lives.

"The offender gets the chance to apologise and reflect on the wider impact of what he has done, and it does have a real, quantitative impact on reoffending rates.

"I like it because it gives me an insight into prison life."

While this is Mr Booker's first novel, he has enjoyed a successful career as a screenwriter of prime time TV drama for the BBC, ITV and US TV.

His credits include BBC1's *Inspector Lynley Mysteries*, *Holby City* and *The Mrs Bradley Mysteries* starring Diana Rigg; ITV1 thrillers *The Stepfather* and *The Blind Date*; and *Perfect Strangers*, the CBS romantic comedy starring Rob Lowe and Anna

Friel.

He has also written several plays for BBC Radio 4 and has worked extensively as a producer in television and radio and as a journalist.

He said: "I've been writing since I was knee-high to a grasshopper, and I've done lots of stuff over many years but I wanted to write a book because in TV and radio the process can be writing by committee, because when you write the script you have input from a small army of people.

"That's good up to a point, but it's a very particular sort of writing - with a book it's just you and the story."

The novel is the first in a series of books featuring Morgan Vine, a single mum and fiercely determined investigative journalist who specialises in such miscarriages of justice.

"It's exciting to have the opportunity to write more," he said.

"I think it's a character and a story that's got potential and hopefully people will respond well to it."

■ Without Trace by Simon Booker is out now in ebook (Twenty7, £4.99) and published in paperback on June 16 (Twenty7, £7.99).

Weekending February 21, 2016 **33**

Whitney's Bodyguard bursts on to the stage

REVIEW **B** **d** **h**
Bodyguard is at Canterbury's Marlowe now. **Chris Britcher** casts a critical eye

THERE must be some unwritten law that says pop stars and movies don't mix. With the only exception being their first effort.

So while Prince's *Purple Rain* remains a classic, the rest of his movies are, for the most part, poorly scripted, self-indulgent bilge.

Madonna's *Desperately Seeking Susan* was fun...but let's not dwell on the likes of *Shanghai Surprise* or the dire *Body of Evidence*.

And the same applies to Whitney Houston and *The Bodyguard*.

On paper, the combination of the

singing sensation - playing a character not a million miles from herself (a fiery, diva whose star was so bright it dazzled) - and Kevin Costner as her protector from a world of weirdos, sounded awful.

Yet the reality was that *The Bodyguard*, while no masterpiece, was a solid slab of entertainment. Costner was pretty straight faced throughout, which suited his acting style, while our Whitney blended some decent acting with some knock-out performances.

Mixed in with a storyline that united some genuine tension, a love story, a sharp script (albeit rather reliant on some stereotypes - Gary



RUN: The Bodyguard will be at the Marlowe until February 27 as part of its UK tour

Kemp's success-focused manager and Mike Starr's lumbering security guard) and a couple of real stand out set-pieces, and it justly found itself a huge hit which stands the test of time.

A little more than 20 years on and the world is a very different place. Whitney's life and career took a tragic turn and pop stars making movies is now something of a rarity.

Yet *The Bodyguard* lives on in musical form. After proving a hit on the West End, it is now touring the UK arenas - opening on Wednesday night at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre for a 10-night run which concludes on February 27.

And given the soundtrack album it's perhaps no surprise. However, *The Bodyguard*, on stage, falls such a long way short of the film version - a comparison every theatre-goer is destined to make - that even when you factor in the limitations of stage over screen, it is ultimately a disappointment.

Carole Stennett takes over the Whitney role of Rachel Marron and while she makes a decent fist of it, she lacks the required clout for the audience to believe this is truly someone at the very top of their game.

Some of the song set pieces make her look more like she's in the first live show of a new *X Factor* series and unfamiliar with the glitz and glamour of the big stage production numbers. Ironical given that *X Factor* winner Alexandra Burke is the normal star of the show, but for some reason has decided to sit Canterbury's run out. It may have made all the difference.

The whole point of Rachel Marron is that she's this big superstar who should capture your gaze and hold it. You can't expect another Whitney, of course, but you should expect not to keep losing her among the backing performers.

What's more her voice is frequently outgunned by Rachel John as her

sister, Nicki Marron. Part of the plot, I grant you, but it further dilutes our suspension of belief.

Meanwhile, Stuart Reid as Frank Farmer is a masterclass in wooden. Now, granted, he's supposed to be the straight-faced bodyguard, but his facial expression rarely changes and his love affair with Rachel goes from 0-60 in a manner which fails to convince. As a result there were sniggers in the audience at moments you feel sniggers weren't expected.

But that is not the main crime this show is guilty of. Because, at its heart, it relies far too much on the audience being massive fans of the film. Of knowing the depth of the storyline already. Thus, it clearly felt it necessary to add almost no depth to any of the characters - with the exception of Nicki Marron which in turn makes her perhaps the only actor to emerge with some kudos - or provide any real reason as to why certain twists and turns occur.

The story arc, such as it is, exists

purely in the audience's recollection of the original. And that's a real shame. Theatre is more than capable of delivering a film adaptation which can surpass the celluloid version by harnessing the live setting and delivering a variation on the theme.

Which is not to say this production is without some merit.

Firstly, the actual staging is magnificent. The framing of the sets is beautifully done and we switch between scenes with effortless, thoroughly convincing, ease. The depth of the Marlowe stage really adding to the depth of the production.

What's more, the live band underpinning the big musical numbers adds a real quality clout and acoustic fizz to the show.

But ultimately it may boil down simply to this. If you like Whitney Houston, you're probably going to enjoy this.

Because in addition to the movie's soundtrack we get whisked through a whole host of the singer's finest moments - from *I Wanna Dance With Somebody* to *One Moment in Time* and plenty inbetween. The finale, of course, being *I Will Always Love You*.

Yet it should, surely, be more than a Whitney tribute show? And with a little more character development it could hit the mark.

Perhaps it was just me, but of all the fabulous productions the Marlowe has taken from the West End in recent years, this was a disappointment. But horses for courses - lots of the crowd were lapping it up and on their feet by the end so go and enjoy it; it will put a smile on your face.

■ The Bodyguard runs at the Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury, until February 27. Tickets cost £28 to £54. To book see the website www.marlowetheatre.com or call the box office on 01227 787787.



IMPACT: Set piece routines are impressive
34 Week ending February 21, 2016



RACHEL: Actress Carole Stennett

East

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Love your pet

A celebration of our special friends...

Welcome!

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of Love Your Pet. They are some of our dearest friends and in this special supplement we wanted to celebrate the special bond that exists between us and our pets.

As temperatures remain low and ice warnings are issued, animal charity Battersea Dogs and Cats Home offers some advice on how to protect your feline friends from anti-freeze, which is commonly used during the colder months.

We will also be taking a look at different ways to keep your pet happy and healthy throughout the year, and the grants available to animal rehoming centres this year.

This supplement will be running each month and we want to hear your stories about your pets, the things that make them special or any quirky tales you might have. Get in touch with us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.



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The chance to get your pet microchipped before the law change comes into force in early April

The Kent North West RSPCA branch will be offering free microchipping services before the law change

With less than two months to go until pet owners will be legally required to have their dogs microchipped, the Kent North West RSPCA branch is offering free chipping at their Dartford clinic.

Microchipping involves planting a chip under the animal's skin - giving them a good chance of being identified and returned to their owners if they are lost or stolen.

The law change will come into force on April 6, when it will be a legal requirement to have any dog over the age of eight weeks microchipped, under the Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations.

The dog will also be registered to an approved database, with keepers and breeders of dogs being required to keep their details up to date.

The Kent North West RSPCA branch will be offering free chipping during its monthly microchipping clinic, situated on Gordon Road, Dartford.

The first will take place on March 5 from 10am to 12.30pm, and on April 2 from 10am to 12.30pm.



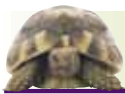
MICROCHIP: It will be legally required

The branch covers people living in Dartford and Swanley, and the clinic is open to anyone living in those postcodes.

Booking is not required.

The free service is undertaken by trained volunteers, but any donations would be greatly appreciated.

For more information you can contact Eric Grover on 01322 220921.



The dangers of anti-freeze

As temperatures take a tumble, with the Met Office issuing two yellow warnings of ice in most parts of the UK, animal charity Battersea Dogs and Cats Home has issued warnings about the dangers of anti-freeze....

As freezing temperatures hit the UK, Battersea Dogs and Cats Home is warning pet owners about the widely unknown chilling hazards behind anti-freeze.

Ethylene glycol, otherwise known as anti-freeze, is a chemical commonly used during the winter to prevent freezing and is frequently used in car radiators, screen washes and de-icers, as well as in garden water features to stop them freezing over.

Cats seem to be attracted to the taste of this chemical which can prove deadly if they ingest it.

The world renowned charity takes in over 3,000 cats every year, many of whom are strays or cats who like to roam freely outside where anti-freeze could pose an even stronger risk.

Cats and especially kittens

like six week old Tiny Tim (pictured) merely need to lick a small amount of this toxic liquid for them to become seriously ill or worse.

Any animal should be taken to the vet immediately if they may have come into contact with anti-freeze.

There are anti-freeze products on the market that are safer for animals and Battersea strongly advocates the universal use and retail of these products which do not contain ethylene glycol to safeguard against future harm and distress for pets and their owners.

Battersea's head of cattery Lindsey Quinlan said: "Anti-freeze poisoning sadly kills an average of 50 cats a month in this country and with the forecasted plummeting temperatures we are urging cat owners to be

aware of the following symptoms in their moggies, which can occur within 30 minutes of anti-freeze ingestion.

"These include vomiting; appearing sleepy and disorientated; drinking more than usual; seizures; faster breathing rate; and going to the toilet more frequently."

Ms Quinlan continued: "Anti-freeze poisoning is lethal and the faster you can get your cat treated, the better chance it has of surviving.

"Battersea are calling on all manufacturers of anti-freeze to make their products without the chemical ethylene glycol.

"It would take little to make this change, but it would have a huge effect on the safety of cats across the country."



WARNING: Kittens like Tiny Tim could become seriously ill if they lick anti-freeze



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Our service even includes a complimentary "Bark n' Ride" service, where we will collect your dog from home in the morning and then drop them back in the evening, ideal for working families with a dog home alone.

Full day, half day & two hour social sessions are available on a daily, weekly or ad-hoc basis.

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Chance for a charity grant

Support Adoption for Pets has a number of £4,000 and £10,000 grants on offer for local animal rehoming centres, to help with either microchipping or renovation projects, as part of its 10th birthday...

Animal rescue charity Support Adoption for Pets will be offering animal rehoming centres across the UK the chance to apply for financial support.

The deadline to apply for one of these grants is fast approaching, with money offered for both microchipping and renovation purposes.

This is part of the independent animal charity's new 2016 grant scheme, which has been launched to celebrate its 10th year.

Animal rehoming organisations in the local area can now either apply for a £4,000 or £10,000 grant.

The £4,000 grants are available through the new Helping Paws award, with the donation going towards items such as microchips and scanners.

There will be 20 of these grants available, with the charity launching them ahead of the microchipping law change in April, which requires all dogs over the age of eight weeks to be micro-chipped and registered to an approved database.

For larger organisations in the area, Support Adoption For Pets will also be awarding £10,000 grants to rescues for renovation projects.

These can include enrichment paddocks, fencing, exercise areas or renovations to upgrade existing kennels, catteries and animal housings.

There will be 10 of these larger grants available.

Amy Wilson, charity manager at Support Adoption For Pets, said: "We couldn't think of a better way to celebrate our 10th

birthday than to introduce an exciting new grant scheme.

"The tiered structure means that throughout the year there should be a grant relevant to every rehoming rescue in the country, big and small, starting with these."

She added: "We want to appeal to as many rescues as possible in offering financial aid as every rehoming centre is hugely worthwhile, particularly in its local area."

Do you have a rehoming centre, or know of one in your local area that would appreciate this funding?

To find out more about the grants on offer you can visit www.supportadoptionforpets.co.uk.

Applications for both of the grants will be closing on Friday (February 26).

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Keep your pet happy and healthy

Pets Corner's head of training has offered some top tips on how to maintain your pet's health, such as watching what they eat and keeping them warm

There are some recommendations that our beloved pets will need to follow in order to maintain good health.

With veterinary bills seeing a rise, the average UK bill is set at more than £300.

There are some simple steps to take to make sure that your pet is happy and healthy.

Head of training at Pets Corner Lucy Ross has provided her three top tips:

- Keep an eye on your pet's diet

Over a third of pet owners use 'human' food to treat their pets, without knowing that such foods can be too high in fat and potentially toxic.

Certain human foods may appear perfectly fine to feed your animals, but in actual fact are dangerous and potentially lethal.

- Grapes, nuts, onion and avocado are among these

foods since they contain toxins and compounds that can cause severe damage such as heart congestion and toxicity.

Cooked bones are often mistaken as a healthy treat to give cats and dogs.

When given in their cooked state bones have a reduced moisture content and become brittle and can splinter harshly.

Raw bones are safer to give your pets since they have a different molecular structure to cooked bones that allow flexibility as well as providing essential fats and vitamins that keep your pets happy and healthy.

- Balance treats with exercise

Over feeding our furry friends has become a big problem in the UK, with 68 per cent of owners not following professional guidelines for portion sizes.

An increase in weight can be dangerous to your pet's health and can even shorten the lives of animals.

Being aware of the size of your animal in relation to the amount of food they eat can

help pets to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Small dogs have a much higher energy requirement due to their higher ratio of surface area to body weight and therefore require a high calorie content food.

Feeding should be balanced with regular exercise, therefore adult pooches should have at least 30 minutes of exercise every day in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

- Protect pets from cold weather

It is important that pets are kept warm and sheltered from the cold during the winter months.

Furry friends that are housed outside will acclimatise during the colder months and build up a warm thick coat.

Animals should therefore not be brought inside for the night and put out again during the day as this may cause them to moult - causing them stress and making them vulnerable to the cold.



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Women Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

DANCE partner, 70-75, sought by lady in Tunbridge Wells area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421071

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+. Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673

GENUINE single female 49, seeking good-natured, intelligent, polite, single male for friendship/relationship. Text only to Mailbox: 4198603

SUE, 39yrs, passionate, broadminded and feisty seeks discreet fun with Mr Wrong. Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 413007

KIND, caring lady of African origin, living in UK for past 20 years, looking for a gentleman who is kind and caring, must have a GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421041

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

ANGELA, 53, African origin, looking for a kind, genuine, caring gentleman, 60 years +. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421039

LUCY first time advertiser, 32yrs, tall slim blonde airline worker, seeks discreet gent, any status for casual fling. Looks/age unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box: 420237

DANCE partner 65-75 sought by Maureen, Thanet based lady, slim, brown hair, green eyes, seeking dancing, fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420231

KAREN, blue eyed blonde, size 14 with a large bust, 46yrs. Give me a call for some discreet chats. Text only Box: 4053061

mydate24

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399

SINGLE slim female, 68, n/s, GSOH, likes cooking, walking etc, seeks male, single, slim 65-70, n/s, with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420091

KAREN, 42yrs, attractive and broadminded, seeks no strings fun with chap any age, must be discreet. Tel: 0906 515 3039 Box: 407953

SLIM female GSOH, 53, likes walking, pub lunches, days out, looking for soul mate, smart appearance, similar interests N/S GSOH, easy going. Text only to Mailbox no: 426200

I'M Chloe, 33yrs old, sensual blonde lady with fabulous figure, workaholic, seeking new circle of men for casual fun. Looks/age/status unimportant must be fun and openminded. Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 420261

KIND lady, 50s, been broken hearted, seeks kind, genuine man for caring relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419889

JASMINE, musical lady, husband in the forces and bored alone. 35yrs but loves older men. ACA. Text only Box: 4181836

PAT, slim, single, 68, non-smoker, GSOH, likes going for walks etc, seeks male, slim, single, 66-70, non-smoker, clean-shaven, GSOH, with similar interests. Canterbury area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419081

FEMALE easy going, kind, loving, genuine, romantic, car boots, gardening, seeking male with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417603

MARION, early 70s, young at heart, GSOH, active, likes walking, gardening, meals out, travel, theatre and animals, looking for male friendship to share interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419657

SALLY ANN, care worker for the elderly so loves older men. Im only 29yrs but very mature. Text only Box: 4145714

CHANTELLE, 5ft3 light brown/blonde hair, blue eyes, like nights in/out, walks, animals, romance seeks honest guy. Littlehampton. Text only to Mailbox no: 4923883

MARIE, very lonely middle-aged woman, looking for a kind hearted older man, late 70s/early 80s for friendship/companionship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418955

RACHEL late 40s, blonde, blue eyes and very voluptuous. Looking for a kind, caring honest man. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418741

ESSEX lady, mid 60s, adaptable, seeking nice male, likes most things. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418537

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418117

HELEN, widow 58, medium build, 5ft 4ins, blonde, GSOH, likes a chat, days out, looking to start again with someone of similar age. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376243

FEMALE, 59, GSOH, many interests, seeks caring male for fun friendship maybe more, genuine calls only. Text only to Mailbox No: 4819793

GORGEOUS flower, Ashford Kent, 51, larger lady, large personality, easy going, seeks male who likes dogs, animals for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417435

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PAT, 68, young at heart, slim, proud 4' 11" GSOH, N/S, likes walking etc Whistable area, seeks similar slim easy going male 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419081

SUSIE fit, friendly, looking for someone to love and look after me, preferably older, N/S male with own car. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392537

HAPPY young looking lady, 62, likes socialising, conversation, seeking nice man to share good times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407383

KATIE, 5ft 5, slim dark hair, very attractive female, likes most things in life and a good laugh, looking for a similar male. Text only to Mailbox No: 4722127

NICE female looking for decent genuine male for friendship to start out with. Text only to Mailbox No: 4710874

BLONDE female, 5ft 1ins, size 12, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, walks, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409025

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

ATTRACTIVE lady early 50s, petite, Scandinavian blonde professional, WLTm professional, caring gent, 50-60s for attention and future together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416569

RACHEL attractive, blue eyes, blonde, voluptuous, seeking kind, honest, generous kind male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418403

ALAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

ALISON 39, petite with long brown hair, hazel eyes, very loving, seeking similar male for an uncomplicated relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416517

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

MALE, 54, looking for discreet lady, 60-70, for adult fun and a special friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421085

BARRY, 50, 6ft, well-built, seeks lovely lady for good times, loving and enjoying life. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421047

DAVE 64 solvent, working, not bad looking, would like to meet slim, fun to be with female, 50 to 60, to get to know. Chelmsford area. Text only to Mailbox: 4368820

TREVOR, late 60s, retired property developer, divorced, enjoys travel, sun, sea and sailing, WLTm someone with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421029

MALE 38, good-looking, GSOH, seeks lady, 35-55 for laughter and lots of fun. Kent/Sussex. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 369301

CALM, kind and good company, male seeking a lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419733

MATTHEW, five foot eleven, looking for a mature lady for discreet friendship and a few laughs. Dartford area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419469

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, just retired, own house, likes holidays, reading, cinema, WLTm similar professional lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420767

HASTINGS male, 51, 5ft10, medium-build, blue eyes, fair hair, fun loving, seeks female, 30-55, for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420745

PAUL 49 5ft 8ins likes eating/nights in/out seeks loving female for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404013

ALISON 30, pretty, slim with long brown hair, fit and active seeks fit older male for energetic relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416497

DEBORAH 41, intelligent brunette, lovely brown eyes, discreet, many interests, seeks similar male to share fun and good conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416515

ATTRACTIVE black, athletic lady, varied interests, seeks similar white, old fashioned, genuine male for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416215

MAY sexy black African female, 38, hardworking, seeks generous friendly male for mutual rewarding friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416211

SUE young at heart, good looking, enjoy life, socialising, beach walks, gardening, theatre, seeking male, 55-65 to share life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416171

BLONDE female, 47, looking for fun, sensual, experienced, understanding, seeking similar. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415675

HUBERT, lives in Rochester, single, lonely, looking for someone to get together with and make something happen and enjoy the rest of life with! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420049

PAUL 52, seeks loving female for exciting times, meals out, weekends away, cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418077

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421

MALE 56, likes good conversation, seeks older lady for discreet friendly fun, 50 plus. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419201

YOUNG 60yr old male, knows how to treat a lady, seeking special lady to spoil for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417909

MICK 50, seeks attractive female for nice times out, genuine calls only. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417691

PAUL GSOH, 5ft 8ins, medium build, seeking Miss Right for LTR to put the spark back into life. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 391970

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes meals out, cinema, music, holidays, seeks female, 30-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195

PAUL 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

MALE 51, 5ft 8ins, N/S, GSOH, easygoing, seeks slim female, 18-45, for friendship maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 338269

ROCKABILI guy, seeks rock chick, 25-50 who likes 50's rock music and bands. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 284750

DAVE 46, seeks active female for walking, climbing and outdoor fun. Days out and evenings in. Friendly and GSOH. Text only to Mailbox no: 5338933

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, just retired, own house, loves holidays, WLTm a lady for meals out, and to enjoy each others company. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419751

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163

WHITE Knight 59 5'10 tall, OHAC, in shining armour, looking for Damsel in Distress of similar age to share fun & laughter. Text only to Mailbox no: 5073004

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641

MALE 47, builder, seeks lady for companionship and closeness, age and looks unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 4924811

45 year old male, looking for a happy intelligent friendly female for company and evenings in or out, looks or race unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 5063649

MALE, 39, tall, hardworking, 6ft 2, looking for long-term lover/older woman. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418877

WRITER tall, slim, dark hair, generous, seeking broadminded lady for fun times. Any age/status. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412749



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JOHN, 47, six foot two, well-built, handsome, non-smoker, intelligent and funny, doesn't take himself too seriously, easy to get along with, seeks attractive female, any age, for discreet, adventurous, any time fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419461

NICE looking genuine man would like to meet nice lady any age for company, outings with GSOH. Text only to Mailbox no: 4922399

ANDREW, 63, likes animals, walking, boot fairs, shopping, looking for someone similar living in the Maidstone/Kent area, for possible LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419203

RICHARD 59 from East Kent, WLTm genuine female 50 plus for friendship! Text only to Mailbox No: 4448765

MALE 56 yrs, GSOH, n/s, would like to meet a lady to have happy times, lots of love to give, to enjoy good times in and out. Text only to Mailbox no: 4181244

M I K E Canterbury mature male, seeks single mum/lady, 28-42, slim-medium build for loving, caring relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415275

MALE, 39, tall, hardworking, 6ft 2, looking for long-term lover/older woman. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418877

WRITER tall, slim, dark hair, generous, seeking broadminded lady for fun times. Any age/status. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412749

MALE, 39, tall, hardworking, 6ft 2, looking for long-term lover/older woman. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418877

WRITER tall, slim, dark hair, generous, seeking broadminded lady for fun times. Any age/status. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412749

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

MATURE guy, loves CD, seeks similar friend for mutual fun, can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421093

MALE likes CD, seeking similar male for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418513

BI guy heavy build, WLTm assertive adventurous white or Indian guy for mutual pleasure. Text only to Mailbox no: 4321273

SENIOR bi male, 70s, n/s, clean-shaven, living in the Maidstone area, seeking similar bi male, aged 50-60, in the Maidstone area, for myself to give service to. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420219

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LANGUAGE: Word Power will be performed at three venues in Kent

'Word fanatic' discusses his love of the English language

Former MP Gyles Brandreth will talk all things syntax in his new stage show

SELF-PROFESSED 'word fanatic' Gyles Brandreth will be bringing his new show - Word Power - to venues in Sevenoaks, Canterbury and Maidstone.

The former MP, who has starred in TV shows including The One Show and Have I Got News For You, will be discussing his 'beloved English language' in the show, which begins its UK tour in April.

So what does he love about the English language?

"Everything. English is the richest language in the world," he said.

"There are 500,000 words in the English dictionary. The unfortunate French only have 100,000 words in their vocabulary - and that includes 'le weekend'.

"Language is what makes us human. As the philosopher Bertrand Russell said 'no matter how elo-

quently a dog may bark, he cannot tell you that his parents were poor but honest. Only words can do that.'

He describes literary legend William Shakespeare - as his 'linguistic hero'.

"He died 400 years ago this year, but he is one of the reasons that English is the world's richest and most wonderful language.

"Until Shakespeare came along, the English language lacked excitement. Yes, Shakespeare invented the word - along with more than a thousand others. It appears first in his play, Hamlet."

Speaking about the inspiration for his previous and latest shows, he said: "I was an MP - until the people spoke. When I lost my seat, I wondered what to do next.

"Someone suggested I take a show to the Edinburgh Fringe. I did. And I was very lucky. The show

won awards and five star reviews.

"Since then I have taken three more shows to Edinburgh and I've been just as lucky with them.

"I try to create a show about a subject I love and that I think will interest and amuse people.

"My Word Power show is my favourite so far."

Mr Brandreth says that he likes new words, and will be addressing some of the ways that our language is changing in the show.

"The English language is rich because it isn't pure.

"New words are arriving all the time and lots of them have come along with new technology.

"I like acronyms like YOLO. I like fun abbreviations. Ridic is a bit ridiculous, but why not? I love new words. Do you ever Mosh? (I do). Of course, there are dangers in the brave new world of texting, and

some of the funny ones feature in Word Power."

He added: "With my Word Power show, I hope audiences will have a happy, surprising, interesting time.

"The one thing they'll know is that it's live: a real performer with a real audience having an evening together that's unique. Every show is a little bit different.

"I hope you'll come and, afterwards, I hope you'll come and say hello."

Mr Brandreth will be performing at the Hazlitt Theatre on April 4 at 8pm, The Ship Theatre, Sevenoaks, on June 24 at 7.30pm and the Gulbenkian, Canterbury, on June 25 at 7.30pm.

For tickets to the Maidstone performance call 01622 758611, or call 01732 460 143 for the Sevenoaks performance or 01227 769 075 for the Canterbury show.

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Lulu releases new song ahead of her Tunbridge Wells show

by Molly Kersey-Law

molly.kersey-law@archant.co.uk

WELL-KNOWN singer Lulu will be performing in Tunbridge Wells during her tour of the UK.

Her career has spanned 50 years, and she will be performing a number of her hits including Shout, The Man Who Sold The World and To Sir With Love - the theme song to the 1967 film of the same name starring Sidney Poitier.

She began her singing career at the age of just 15, and shot to fame after releasing Shout in 1964.

In 1968 she became the host of her own BBC show Happening For Lulu and carried out a variety of TV work in the following years.

She has recently teamed up with the Military Wives Choir to create her new song Cry, which will be released on Friday (February 26).

All of the proceeds from the single will be donated to the Military Wives Choir Foundation charity, and to support the single's release a number of different Military Wives Choirs will be invited to perform on stage with her during her



SINGER: Lulu has teamed up with the Military Wives Choir to release Cry

tour.

Lulu said: "Having a different Military Wives Choir join me on-stage every night will be a lot of fun. But on a more serious note, later in my life I was diagnosed as having post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and what that did was help me to relate even more with our men and women in the armed forces."

"I realised I would like to do

something to help, so we recorded Cry and my brother and I rewrote the lyrics to apply specifically to the military."

Sara Scott, trustee of The Military Wives Choirs Foundation, added: "We are delighted to team-up with the amazing Lulu for the release of Cry."

"Women are the strength behind the strong, and there is now a network of 75 choirs on military

bases across the UK and overseas.

"The opportunity for different Military Wives Choirs to perform Cry with Lulu at each date of her UK tour is such an honour."

Lulu will be performing at the Assembly Hall Theatre on April 18 at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £35.

For more details or to book you can visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.

Tom Jones due on stage

LEGENDARY singer Tom Jones will perform at Bedgebury Pinetum, near Tunbridge Wells, as part of Forest Live.

He will perform on June 17 and tickets are on sale now. Call 03000 680400 to book.



Jimmy Carr in Margate

COMEDIAN Jimmy Carr will be performing at the Margate Winter Gardens in November.

He will perform his new show - The Best Of, Ultimate, Gold, Greatest Hits Tour - on November 19 at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £27.50.

Call 01843 292795 to book.

Hernhill folk performance

FOLK duo Miranda Sykes and Rex Preston will be performing at Hernhill Village Hall on March 11.

The show starts at 7pm and tickets are £11.

Call 01227 392560 to book.



Comedy exploring dance

A comedy show exploring dancing, music and love will be performed at the Theatre Royal Margate on April 5 at 7.30pm.

The production is written by Steve Blount, Peter Daly, Gavin Kostick and Janet Moran and directed by Mr Daly.

Visit www.theatreroyalmargate.com to book.

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The Charles Dickens is one of the largest pubs in Broadstairs. Its menus contain classic British ingredients, many of which are locally sourced.

You can book now by calling 01843 600160 or book online www.charlesdickens.co.uk.

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Pegwell Bay Hotel is a beautiful cliff top hotel and it is the perfect venue to relax and enjoy a stress free Mother's Day.

Call 01843 599590 to book or visit www.pegwellbayhotel.co.uk.

The Captain Digby is the ultimate family pub and a great venue for a family Mother's Day this year, with indoor and outdoor children's play areas and wonderful views for you to take in and relax on this special day.

Book now 01843 867764 or book online www.captaindigby.co.uk

Go on, you know your Mum deserves it.



THE Vienna Festival Ballet will be bringing Coppelia to Sevenoaks, Gravesend, Maidstone and Margate.

The lively production, infused with old world charm, appeals to audiences of all ages and tells the story of an eccentric toymaker and his beloved doll.

The colourful costumes, lively characters and beautiful music from Delibes all combine to create a magical and comical classic that warms and entertains from start to finish. Coppelia is guaranteed to lift the hearts of all the family.

Celebrated Austrian dancer Peter Mallek founded the company after his illustrious career as a dancer of

international renown, in 1980.

Now in their 35th year of producing quality ballet productions, the company continues to experience remarkable success and perform great classical ballets all over the world. Their productions have all the elegance and extravagance associated with the best of ballet.

Coppelia will be performed at the Stag Community Arts Centre, Sevenoaks, the Woodville, Gravesend, Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone and the Margate Winter Gardens.

For further details about the performances visit www.viennafestivalballet.com.

AS requested by their guests, afternoon tea has arrived at McLeods Restaurant, Medway Road, Gillingham.

So why not treat your Mum to a delicious afternoon tea to celebrate Mother's Day?

The first two dates available will be March 11 and April 1.

They have two afternoon tea menus available and prices start at £12 per person.

However, if you are looking for a real treat then why not go with the luxury afternoon tea menu - with prices at £15 per person.

For an extra indulgence you can opt to add on a glass of sparkling

wine for £3.

The traditional menu includes scones with clotted cream and strawberry preserve, as well as sandwiches and assorted teas.

The luxury menu includes a wider selections of sandwiches as well as macarons, a variety of cakes and pastries and savoury food including a roasted onion and goat's cheese filo tart.

In order to attend one of these afternoon teas you will need to book your place in advance.

There are minimum spaces available.

For more information or to book you can call 01634 383104.



TREAT Mum to a meal at the Waggon at Hale's restaurant.

A three course meal is £18.95 including a glass of wine for Mum when all three courses are purchased.

The Waggon at Hale is an independent family-run traditional country pub situated on Capstone Road, Chatham.

Starters include homemade carrot and coriander soup or a prawn and crayfish cocktail.

Main courses on offer include a fresh salmon fillet, a roast topside of British Beef, roast loin of English pork or a stilton and vegetable crumble.

Emma and her team will offer you a warm and friendly welcome, whether you are looking for somewhere to have a good old pint of real ale, a glass of wine or looking to dine on our freshly prepared food served all day everyday.

They also have a large beer garden where your children can play in safety in the children's play area or enjoy their small animal farm which includes pigs, a goat, chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs as well as Onions - the pub dog.

Food is served from 10am to 9pm from Monday to Saturday and 10am to 6pm on Sunday.

For details call 01634 400800.

Faustus due in Canterbury

FOLK trio Faustus will be performing at the Marlowe Studio, Canterbury.

The show will take place on March 10 at 8pm and tickets are £13.

To book call 01227 787787.



Macarbe thriller on stage

HAROLD Pinter's cryptic thriller The Birthday Party will be performed at the Theatre Royal Margate on June 10.

The performance will start at 7.30pm and tickets are £16 or £14 with concessions.

For more details or to book call the box office on 01843 292795.

The hits of U2 performed

TRIBUTE band U2UK will perform some of U2's best-known songs at the Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone.

The show takes place on March 11 at 7.30pm.

Call 01622 758611 to book.



Orchestra at cathedral

CHOIR and instrument orchestra The Sixteen and their conductor and founder Harry Christophers will perform at Rochester Cathedral later this month.

The performance takes place on Friday (February 26) and tickets range from £15 to £30. Call 01634 338141 to book.

Festival that celebrates both women and girls

By Molly Kersey-Law

molly.kersey-law@archant.co.uk

A festival which aims to 'celebrate women and girls' will be taking place in Folkestone next month.

Marking International Women's Day, Women of the World will run from March 8 to 12.

The festival is co-curated by Folkestone Quarterhouse, Folkestone Fringe and Leah Thorn, and it looks at a number of important issues for women today.

This year's festival will be exploring topics such as women in war, politics and the beauty industry, as well as examining the role of men in ending sexism and righting the under-representation of women in the school syllabus.

A number of performances and workshops will be taking place at the Folkestone Quarterhouse.

Liz Aggiss will perform The English Channel on March 8.

The show tells the story of a career forged in performance art and dance-film.

It will be starting at 7.30pm.

Artists in the county will have the chance to meet and share extracts of their work during the



WOW Scratch Night Event on March 9 at 7.30pm.

The London Feminist Film Festival will be taking place the following evening at the same time, showcasing a selection of short films exploring how to inspire women's rights activism around the world.

Victoria Melody will be presenting Hair Peace on March 11 at 7.30pm.

She becomes an unlikely sleuth after being told that she would need to wear hair extensions as

part of a beauty pageant, setting out on an adventure to find out where this hair comes from.

Women of the World in Concert will be taking place on the closing night of the festival.

The event will begin with a performance from musician Nina Clark, followed by the Quarterhouse Choir - led by Carol Grimes.

American singer and Radio 2 presenter Nell Bryden will also perform a number of her songs.

To view the full programme visit www.quarterhouse.co.uk.



PERFORMANCE: Liz Aggiss in The English Channel



SINGER: Nina Clark will be performing at the festival

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Mary Berry is offering top tips in her BBC show

Foolproof Cooking is aiming to help budding chefs to nail even the smallest details in the kitchen....

IN 45 years of writing cookery books, Mary Berry has seen many a newfangled device bid for a permanent space on her spotless worktops. But the latest one - the spiralizer - hasn't passed the all-important Berry test.

"Everybody said, 'What about these spiralizers, what are they like?' 'So I brought several in and tried them and then used them in the programme, just because people are talking about them and they want to see people like me using them," she said, referring to her new show, Mary Berry's Foolproof Cooking.

"I think it's quite fun, if you want something light that spins the vegetables out and looks attractive. I expect it'll be something here today and

gone tomorrow."

She's certainly earned the right to express an opinion, with yet another cookbook now added to her ever-expanding collection.

The one that accompanies the BBC Two series takes her total to "about 70", all kept in what one can only imagine is a very sturdy bookcase in her immaculate Buckinghamshire home.

The idea for Foolproof Cooking came from her love of helping budding chefs nail even the smallest details in the kitchen.

"I wanted to give every possible detail with the recipes, so I included tips all the way through the book. So in every recipe, it says, 'Mary's foolproof tip'. Like, it's important to use smoked paprika rather than the hot variety,



TIPS: Mary Berry offers advice in her new show

which has more chilli powder in it and can make [a dish] too hot."

The series so far has seen the Great British Bake Off judge visit a garlic farm and go lobster fishing on the Isle of Wight, dine at London restaurant Rules to see how they make their famous Beef Wellington and then recreate her own version at home as well as catching crayfish in Oxfordshire.

In her series last year, Mary Berry's Absolute Favourites, 'Granny Cocoa', as she's affectionately known in her family, cooked on screen with her grandchildren - including twins Abby and Grace, who make an appearance this time round too, helping her with a chicken and bacon lattice pie, while her younger grandsons crop up to create cranberry and coco-

nut energy bars.

"They love cooking," she says warmly, "they don't think about it as being on television. They just think it's a fun day to do things."

When she's not doing anything remotely Bake Off-related, Berry likes to watch other cooking programmes though she's so far resisted her Bake Off co-star Sue Perkins' attempts to get her hooked on Game Of Thrones.

She doesn't keep in regular contact with co-judge Paul Hollywood and presenters Mel Giedroyc and Perkins outside of term-time, or the previous contestants, although she says she's "very proud of them".

Mary Berry's Foolproof Cooking continues on BBC Two from Monday (February 22).

Classic children's tale

A stage adaptation of Clive King's children's novel Stig of the Dump will be performed at the Theatre Royal Margate.

The show tells the story of Barney, who is staying with his grandparents on the chalk Downs when he falls into a hidden den and meets Stig.

It will be on stage on April 8 at 7pm.

For more details or to book visit www.theatreroyalmargate.com.

The Guitar Whisperer

MUSICIAN Richard Durrant will be performing at the Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells.

Mr Durrant - who describes himself as 'the UK's only stand-up, barefoot, un-classical guitarist' - will perform his Guitar Whisperer show on March 11 at 8pm.

Tickets range from £16 to £17.

To book call 01892 678678 or visit www.trinitytheatre.net.

The Eagles' great hits

EAGLES' tribute band The Illegal Eagles will be performing in Dartford on Thursday (February 25).

They will be performing hits such as Hotel California, Life in the Fast Lane and Take it to the Limit.

The show will be at the Orchard Theatre at 7.30pm.

For more details or to book visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.

Tragic musical begins

WILLY Russell's classic musical Blood Brothers will begin its run at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, on Monday (February 22).

The show will be running until Saturday (February 27) with performances at 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

For more details or to book tickets to the show you can visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley.

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Look what's brewing in Belgium

TRAVEL REVIEW: Belgium

by David Mercer

I'M about to sample my first beer of the day and its not even lunchtime.

Drinking alcohol in the morning is usually frowned upon but I have an excuse today, having just completed a tour of Palm Breweries in Belgium.

The country may be famous for its chocolates but it appears to be just as enthusiastic about its beer, and a number of breweries offer tourists the chance to see how Belgium's famous ales are made.

Palm Breweries in Steenhuffel is a short drive from the city of Antwerp and produces a dozen different types of beer, including the US favourite Rodenbach and a red fruit ale called Rosso.

"Brewing beer is chemistry," the tour guide says as we roam around a production line, before taking a seat at the bar in order to see the end results.

While arguably Belgium's most famous beer export, Stella Artois, is considered a strong lager in the UK, most of its rivals in Belgium have an alcohol content above 5 per cent.

After sinking my third variety of Palm beer, I take a taxi to the city of Mechelen to meet local beer expert Sofie Vanrafelghem.

Ms Vanrafelghem is a zythologist who has studied the history of beer-making, and holds a number of events to show how different kinds of ales can compliment certain foods.

She also founded the Women and Beer movement to tackle people's pre-conceptions about the drink.

"My whole life revolves around beer," she explains at her Women and Beer workshop.

"Beer is surrounded by lots of prejudices, like beer is fattening.



BEER: Palm Breweries is a short drive from the city of Antwerp

"Not true. Beer's not healthy. Not true.

"Women wouldn't drink beer with me, so I thought, 'How can I change that?'" she said.

Ms Vanrafelghem claims that regular beer drinkers actually have a "really good bone structure" and a 25cl glass of Pilsner contains fewer than 110 calories.

"Researchers have also discovered people who drink beer live longer,"

she adds.

This is music to my ears.

However, she is keen to point out that drinking Belgium's strong beers should be done in moderation.

One of the more unusual places visitors can enjoy a beer is at the top of St Rumbold's Tower, part of the cathedral in Mechelen.

At 97 metres high, and more than 500 steps to the top, it's a workout to reach the summit of the UNESCO

world heritage site, but the effort is well worth it for the excellent views of Mechelen and northern Belgium.

The company behind one of the country's most popular beers, Duvel, has also opened its doors to visitors for a behind-the-scenes tour of its brewery in the town of Puurs.

Its most popular beer, with an alcohol strength of 8.5 per cent, is served in a glass called a bolleke.

The tour is popular among men

TRAVEL FACTS

DAVID Mercer was a guest of Eurostar who offers up to 10 daily services from London St Pancras International to Brussels, with fares from £29 one-way.

Tickets to any other Belgium station start from £34.50 one-way.

For more details or to book tickets you can visit www.eurostar.com or call 08432 186 186.

and women, with one hen party clearly enjoying the opportunity to sample some of Duvel's products.

Everyone is well behaved though, and visitors are treated to cheese and beer at the end of the tour.

The latest brewery to open up to the public is De Koninck in Antwerp.

The brewery offers an interactive tour, which includes a simulated van drive through the city and an amusing bar scene where the brewery's past owners bicker amongst themselves as they explain the company's history.

For those who are needing to soak up some of that beer, Graanmarkt 13 in Antwerp offers creative dishes from Seppe Nobels, one of the Flemish Kitchen Rebels.

The Rebels are 25 top chefs who are all under the age of 35 and have a passion for Flemish gastronomy and innovative food.

Many of the restaurant's dishes are made with vegetables grown in its very own garden, while it also grows herbs on a roof terrace.

While Brussels and Bruges are already popular Belgian destinations for tourists, Antwerp, Mechelen and its many breweries are the perfect tonic for any beer lover.

Film Reviews by Damon Smith



DEADPOOL (15, 108 mins) Action/Fantasy/Comedy/Romance

JUST when it seemed that the Marvel Comics takeover of multiplexes was becoming a homogenous exercise in rapacious cross-branding, along comes Deadpool to deliver a swift kick to

the franchise's dangling nether regions.

Tim Miller's hyperkinetic origin story is like a newborn puppy that has yet to be house-trained: boundlessly energetic, blissfully oblivious to the rules, and prone to leave a steaming hot mess in a favourite pair of slippers when your guard is down.

"I may be super, but I'm no hero," grins Ryan Reynolds' titular man in figure-hugging red spandex, breaking down the fourth wall to address us directly.

He's not joking, for once.

In an opening salvo of high-speed automotive carnage that combines gratuitous dismemberment with gleeful irreverence, his masked avenger ricochets bullets through the heads of bad guys and pushes a car cigarette lighter into the mouth of one unfortunate henchman.

"Don't swallow," he quips.

The relentless barrage of pop culture references and post-modern in-jokes hinges on Reynolds' ability to charm us and he barrels through every frame with a cocksure swagger that is impossible to resist.

Former Special Forces operative Wade Wilson is a low-rent assassin for hire, who works out of a bar called Sister Margaret's Home For Wayward Girls run by his wise-cracking buddy Weasel.

A loner by heart, Wade falls in love with sassy sex club worker Vanessa, who shares his passion for creative love-making.

The furious bed-hopping ends when Wade discovers he has inoperable cancer.

A recruiter from an experimental program known as WeaponX invites Wade to undergo a radical procedure, which aggressively attacks the cancerous cells.

Sadistic program director Ajax



and henchwoman Angel Dust torture and abuse Wade, transforming him into a hideously deformed mutant with the power of self-healing.

Reborn as Deadpool, Wade moves in with a no-nonsense landlady named Al.

"She's the Robin to my Batman... except she's old, black and blind," he quips.

Aided by two bona fide X-Men - Colossus and Negasonic Teenage Warhead - Wade vows revenge on Ajax and his underlings.

Relentlessly lurid and unapologetically foul-mouthed, Deadpool is a sinful treat.

Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick's script is crammed to bursting with zinging one-liners and a miasma of filth and toilet humour.

MAKE the most of the first sunny day to give your greenhouse a good clean if you plan to start sowing seeds.

A clean greenhouse means that plants will be less vulnerable to pests and diseases and, if you zap them now, your undercover growing area won't become a breeding ground for nuisances.

Before you start, take out as much as you can and turn off the power to electric points, covering them to stop any water splashing them.

The best tools for cleaning the outside are a good hose and a long-handled soft-bristled brush for tackling the roof glass, using a large sponge.

Give it a good rub to remove algae and, if panes overlap, use an old paint label to ease out the dirt and then rinse the area with a hose.

Replace cracked or broken panes or get a professional to do it if you don't feel confident.

Clear greenhouse gutters, removing soggy leaves and debris which could end up in water butts or block your drains. Get a long-handled brush to get rid of the rubbish before it enters the downpipes.

Once the greenhouse is empty, give the floor a really good sweep and get rid of clutter like broken pots, out-of-date feeds and other junk.

Wipe down surfaces with a scouring sponge and wash flower pots and seed trays with disinfectant before thoroughly rinsing and returning to their place in the greenhouse.



GREENHOUSE: Horticulturalist Frances Tophill advises having a 'more or less constant temperature'

Get ahead in the greenhouse

Horticulturalist Frances Tophill, co-presenter of ITV's Love Your Garden and guest speaker at the forthcoming Edible Garden Show in Warwickshire, says: "The art of a good greenhouse is to have a more or less constant temperature.

"In the winter, a heater might be required or a little bubble wrap on the glass. Plants will suffer most if their

foliage is in direct contact with the cold glass, so move them away during the winter months."

The warmth provided in a greenhouse will help a multitude of insects to overwinter in the warm and come back with gusto in the spring to attack your plants.

"To avoid that happening, give your greenhouse a big winter clean-

up, paying particular attention to any standing water where larvae may well be multiplying."

Now is the time to think about growing your early vegetables.

"Early carrots and parsnips - make sure you use one that is canker resistant - are ideal to start in February. It's also a great time to start your garlic and small onions or shallots. If you

have the luxury of a greenhouse then now is the time for growing all your tomatoes, peppers and aubergines," said Ms Tophill.

"Also grow radishes, brassicas and all your peas, including late sweet peas. Now is also the time to get that summer bedding going. So start sowing cleome, dahlias, ricinus (castor oil plant), snapdragons and cerinthe."



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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

CCTV is far from a clear cut case

I AM writing regarding your article about whether CCTV cameras are still cutting crime.

I think I must be missing something here. Most CCTV pictures I have seen are of such terrible quality they could be of anyone.

It is sometimes impossible to tell if the person is male or female as they are so blurred and grainy.

We get crystal clear pictures from the other side of the world so why is the quality of CCTV so bad and why does it never get any better?

As far as I can see, until the quality is improved, the benefits of using CCTV are very limited.

Keith Strong,
Ashford

High price of us exiting Europe

TERRY Mullah [KoS 07.02] is right to stress the need to study both sides of the in/out EU argument.

He doesn't, however, approach the vital matter of UK trade with our continental neighbours in this spirit.

If we were outside the EU, Britain would no longer have its place at the European decision-making table in Brussels. Would this be real 'liberation'?

Brian Beeley,
Tunbridge Wells

EU needs clear thinking debate

I READ your editor's comment [KoS, last week].

I really do take exception when journalists misquote; you stated that Nigel Farage was telling us that 29 million Bulgarians and Romanians would be hot-footing it in our direction to steal our jobs, women etc etc this is not what he said as I am sure you are well aware.

Nigel Farage stated that with open borders millions of Eastern Europeans would have the right to come freely to our country, and he is quite right.

Perhaps you would be good enough to explain to me how any government, whoever is in power at the time, can make provision for the future in our schools, hospitals, local surgeries, pensions etc without having some idea of how many people will be in the country from year to year? This is not a xenophobic view it is just sensible thinking regarding the

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Fight for funding to mental health centre

I AM writing to protest in the strongest terms to Kent County Council's decision to withdraw core funding from Tunbridge Wells Mental Health Resource Ltd (aka MHR), resulting in the closure of The Hub (MHR's drop-in centre) from the end of March 2016.

Whilst I appreciate that KCC has had its own rate support grant from central government cut which, in turn, has prompted KCC to cut or withdraw funding from voluntary sector care providers (eg, MHR), one cannot help feeling the decision to withdraw funding from MHR in particular to be short-sighted and will end up costing the national and local economy more, not least as seriously and not-so-seriously mentally-ill people from west Kent will end up requiring more expensive specialist secondary health care rather than managing their illnesses themselves in the community with minimal support

from remunerated support workers employed by Tunbridge Wells Mental Health Resource.

It is often claimed that one in four suffer from mental illness at some stage in their lives. I dispute this statistic and contend we all will; what differentiates individuals from each other is their ability (or otherwise) to manage any mental distress/illness which affects them.

I know, from personal experience, just how disabling and soul-destroying mental illness can be.

Should KCC not reverse its decision to axe core-funding from MHR, one feels that any "efficiency savings" made in KCC's budget will be more than overshadowed by an increase in self-harm and possible suicides from those who look to MHR to support their attempts to live as independently as possible.

Christopher Luke
Tunbridge Wells

Out of EU we'd still be powerful

DAVID Cameron is now claiming that to leave the EU would mean that Britain would be turning its back on the world.

This is absurd as there are over 150 countries which are not members of the EU and we are the centre of the Commonwealth, the fountainhead of the AngloSphere and possess far greater links around the world than any other nation.

Even now we are ranked as

having the fifth most powerful military forces on the globe.

Does Mr Cameron really believe that to be a province of a single European state would give us more influence than being the proud, independent country we have been for centuries?

Colin Bullen,
Tonbridge

'Better off' is not ours to make

I WAS shocked to see the comment in the report on the tragic Russell murders that, Stone was, "...a man better off behind bars." [KoS, last week].

Whatever his past convictions, which I presume were punished according to law, to suggest that someone should be in prison on anything other than a lawful sentence demeans your paper.

Ron Kipps,
Dartford

Manston idea is just not fair

I NOTE with interest and considerable sympathy the tremendous groundswell of support for the local campaign against the proposed third Thames crossing.

There is a clear potential for a crossing to bring increased air pollution to the area, along with disruption caused by noise and light pollution.

It is with some incredulity that I note one of the more vociferous campaigners, a certain Robin Bull, is currently actively campaigning for the reopening of the former Manston Airport, some 50 miles to the east of Gravesham.

The redevelopment he supports so strongly is sure to cause both air and noise pollution which will directly affect my home. It seems that Robin is rather lacking in credibility, and as such discredits the whole campaign against the third Thames crossing.

Robert Bird,
via email

Let's fight the Lodge Hill plans

I AM totally opposed to development of the site at Lodge Hill.

To build 5,000 houses here would be disastrous for the area. It is now over developed and cannot cope with the number of people locally.

Tom Mason,
Rochester

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.
- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.



Deal beach

by **Ernie Jordan**, from **Margate**

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Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast 8 July, 2016 • Quote: SS7-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for a Super Summer Party - for over 40s only - to make the most of our favourite season. We've lined up a brilliant entertainment showbill featuring 70s themed music and nostalgia, including a live performance by 70s rock-n-rollers Showaddywaddy, a screening of Mamma Mia the movie, plus Abba and Rod Stewart tribute acts. With non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and free drinks every night, this is one party weekend you won't want to miss.

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks per person every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrade available

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The new Honeycombs

The Ultimate 60s Christmas Party

Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast 18 Nov, 2016 • Quote: XP11-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield for a Fab Festive Party - for over 40s only - to get you in the mood for Christmas. With free drinks every night and non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening, this party is sure to be a blast. This years line-up includes: The Searchers, Union Gap, The New Honeycombs, The Cufflinks PLUS a tribute to Dusty Springfield.

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks per person per night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • 60s themed entertainment programme • 3 nights standard en-suite chalet - upgrade available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners



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Warner Norton Grange, Isle of Wight

Friday 25 November, 2016 • Quote: NG11-KOS

Great Entertainment, a fab festive atmosphere, free drinks every evening, good food, comfortable centrally-heated chalets, free car ferry and a super location make Warner's Norton Grange resort, on the Isle of Wight, our most popular over 40s Christmas Party venue. We've booked the whole resort for an exclusive celebration with a super entertainment programme featuring 60s band Union Gap, Roy Carter of Heatwave, a Rod Stewart tribute and more.

INCLUDED: Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night - house beers and spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks and mixers

- 60s themed entertainment programme
- 3 nights standard en-suite chalet - upgrades available: Standard-Plus £15pp; Premier £30pp
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- Return car ferry

BACK TO THE 60s CARRY
ON NEW YEAR PARTY





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Entertainment
Over 40s only
£10pp deposit

3 NIGHTS
HALF BOARD
PLUS FROM
£229^{pp}

Warner Bembridge Coast, Isle of Wight

Friday 6 January, 2017 • Quote: NY1-KOS

Join us for a private party that extends the New Year festivities and takes us on a trip down memory lane - for over 40s only - at Warner Bembridge, on the seafront on the Isle of Wight. Our weekend break includes a gala New Year's Eve party - complete with countdown to midnight, lots of nostalgic fun and Free Drinks every night. As usual the Good News holidays team will be at Bembridge to ensure a great time is had by all. We've lined up a super entertainment programme featuring 60s Bands New Amen Corner and The Pacemakers plus a tribute to Tom Jones with Martin Jarvis and the ever-popular team pantomime.

INCLUDED: Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night - house beers and spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks and mixers

- 60s themed entertainment programme
- 3 nights en-suite chalet - hotel upgrades available
- 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners
- Return Car Ferry

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By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

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SUCCESS: New hybrid version of Volvo's already excellent XC90 premium SUV is a real technological triumph by the Swedish brand



Volvo's hybrid SUV is a technological triumph

BIG hybrid cars make sense - there is more space and weight in which to lose the electric powertrain and those still hefty batteries.

And if the manufacturer has already done a Herculean job on space efficiency and weight-saving for the conventional donor model, then petrol-electric power makes an even stronger case.

The clincher then is the addition of a plug-in facility so that buyers can maximise battery power by ordering their life around regular electric charging at home, the office or public charging facilities.

And this is what Volvo has done with the latest version of its excellent big seven-seat XC90 SUV.

Launched last year and given a rave review here, the XC90 offers presence, practicality - the load area is 1,899 litres with all rear seats down - plus driving pleasure.

The new T8 Twin Engine model (from £60,455) simply adds to an attractive package with its 320bhp 2.0-litre turbo/supercharged petrol engine and 87bhp electric motor.

That's a lot of combined power on tap and the T8 can be hustled along, but most buyers will surely pay the not inconsiderable £14k premium over a conventional diesel XC90 in order to maximise the hybrid mode - its default option.



Of course, there is a 260-kilo weight penalty for the additional powertrain and its batteries, but this doesn't seem to affect the surprising nimbleness of the XC90 that has so impressed me, underlining how the T8 version was clearly in Volvo's mind when it developed the XC90 to be so light yet robust.

The T8 beautifully finished interior has all the standard car's airy and classy appeal too.

So the only question for any would-be buyers out there is: does this newcomer offer me more for the extra money and company tax advantages, or would I be better off choosing from one of the diesel options?

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Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA Rapid range for this offer in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 45.6 (6.2) to 67.3 (4.2); Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2) to 83.1 (3.4); Combined 57.7 (4.9) to 78.5 (3.6). CO₂ emissions for the ŠKODA Rapid range for this offer are 114 to 94 g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

Superb - a change from posh brands

Skoda's latest Superb makes you question the snob value of premium brand equivalents. What's more, style plus space doesn't come any cheaper today

HERE'S a trick. Look at the Skoda Superb Estate and squint a little. Looks like an Audi A6 Avant, doesn't it? But your eyes go the opposite way - wide-eyed - after checking the price difference: from £19,840 for the Superb and from £34,345 for the A6.

That is 'superb' value even if sceptics might say "How can a Skoda justify the name Superb?"

But these critics must have been abducted by aliens for decades and missed the inexorable rise of the Czech brand from joke to serious player.

Along the way, Skoda played the value card for all it was worth and the cars are still well-priced, but now they don't have to be.

In one way, the new Superb actually delivers less than its predecessor, which had a clever bootlid cum hatchback on the saloon version, but the result was frumpy and the cavernous estate won the sales race.

This time, Skoda kept it simple and lighter, so the current car - hatch or estate - is fresher in both style and demeanour, but still a bargain.

Even Mercedes-Benz might sweat because its E-Class 'wagon' has long



been the benchmark for big estate capacity, but the Superb outclasses with a 660-litre boot and 'seats down' maximum load space of 1,950 litres, while also putting some big SUVs/4x4s to shame in the ward-robe-lugging stakes.

Superb superiority is then hammered home by passenger space: this car is a poor man's limo. Rear legroom and all round space is impressive and this alone will boost secondhand values, causing minicab drivers to queue when used Superbs



are on sale in numbers. But that's a bit sad, and indicative of Skoda's problem. This historic company now makes great cars, but only shrewd new car buyers, street-wise used car buyers and tax-savvy company car user

Skoda Superb Estate SE
1.6TDI 120PS

Price:	£21,590
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★★
How green?:	★★★
Best rival:	Ford Mondeo

choosers seek them out - while badge snobs are happy to miss out.

Of course, no car is truly superb and Skoda's namesake is no exception: it delivers a blend of good handling and ride comfort rather than a pin sharp drive.

But why buy a car this big and fling it about anyway? Especially when the Superb is offered, as is increasingly common, with some silly little engines for such a sizeable car. These include a turbocharged 124bhp petrol engine and the 119bhp 1.6 diesel tested here, but buyers can trade up to some of the bigger engines on offer.

All-round though, this is a superb car in name and nature: the interior is well-organised and durable; nothing flash, but premium in quality and a pleasure to use.

NEW 500

Take the iconic Fiat 500. Now imagine it even more quintessentially 500. Cast your eyes over the carefully styled front headlights. Just one of many strikingly stylish touches that make the new Fiat 500 even more fluttering. Sorry, flattering.

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AMOUNT OF CREDIT	£12,065	RATE OF INTEREST (FIXED)	4.78%
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REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLE

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Model shown: Abarth 595 140 HP at £14,610 OTR including Officina Red paint. Official fuel consumption figures for Abarth range mpg (l/100km): Combined 45.6 (6.2) - 48.7 (5.9), Urban 34.4 (8.2) - 37.2 (7.6), Extra urban 55.4 (5.1) - 60.1 (4.7). CO₂ Emissions: 145 - 134 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO₂ figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EC directives/regulations and may not be representative of real-life driving conditions. Factors such as driving style, weather and road conditions may also have a significant effect on fuel consumption. Abarth UK is a trading name of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles UK Ltd. Information available on new Abarth 595 models registered by 31st March 2016. Abarth Deposit Contribution only available in conjunction with Abarth 1-Deal PCP. With Abarth 1-Deal you have the option to return the vehicle and not pay the final payment, subject to the vehicle not having exceeded an agreed annual mileage (a charge of 6p per mile for exceeding 6,000 miles per annum) and being in good condition. Deposit Contribution is only available in conjunction with Fiat Financial Services, PO BOX 4465, Slough, SL1 0RW. All vehicle images are for illustration purposes only and may include options or body paint colours, which incur an additional cost. We work with a number of creditors including Fiat Financial Services.

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Vacancies for

Key Stage 2 Teachers

Permanent, full time positions.

Applications welcome from newly qualified teachers and experienced practitioners.

MPS-UPS plus SEN £4,034 - Start: September 2016

Due to a restructure of our curriculum, we are looking to appoint four dynamic, innovative and creative individuals who are passionate about improving outcomes for our pupils with social and emotional difficulties. We are looking for two teachers to work in our Primary phase and two teachers to take our Y7 classes, teaching them English, maths and Humanities subjects. One teacher will also teach Y8 English and one will teach Y8 maths. Our pupils in KS3 are working within the KS2 objectives.

Vacancy for a

Design & Technology Teacher

Permanent, full time or part-time position.

Applications welcome from newly qualified teachers and experienced practitioners.

MPS-UPS plus SEN £4,034 - Start: September 2016

We are looking to appoint a teacher of Design Technology to teach across the school from Y5 to Y11. We are looking for a dynamic, innovative and creative individual who will motivate and enthuse our pupils to take Entry Level or GCSE exams in the subject and possibly study related subjects post 16. The successful candidate will teach DT for four days per week with the option of a further day per week teaching MFL to KS3 to create a full-time post.

The successful candidates will have a high level of emotional intelligence and resilience, a flexible approach to their work and an ability to embrace change. Candidates will need to possess a sound knowledge of the new National Curriculum, different learning styles and differentiation. An understanding of how to actively engage pupils within lessons is essential. Previous experience working with children with special educational needs would be desirable, however, applications from NQTs with a commitment to working with pupils with Special Needs will also be considered. The school places a high priority on professional and career development.

Harbour School is committed to safeguarding and promoting child welfare. This position is subject to an enhanced DBS check, pre-employment medical clearance, good references and verification of the right to work in the UK.

Visits to the school are welcome and can be arranged via the school office. For more information and an application pack, please contact the school office. No CV's will be accepted

Closing date: 14th March 2016 - Interviews: 21st and 22nd March 2016



Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEOM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

Matron - Margate

Full time

Hours: 37.5 per week

Closing date: 1/03/16

Salary: £40,000.00 Per annum

Qualifications & Experience

- ENB 998 and R/N Level 1 Diploma in Nursing
- 5 years' post registration
- 3 years' experience in management or senior position
- Clinical governance and audit program experience
- Policy/procedural development experience
- Excellent communication and listening skills
- Role model to provide advice and guidance to staff
- Route cause analysis/management of quality improvement

Interviews for this role will be held on 11 March 2016

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Lynn Orrin, Hospital Manager on 01843 234554.

Staff Nurse Nights - Ward - Margate

Part time

Hours: 20 per week

Closing date: 1/03/16

Salary: £22 - 25,000.00 Per annum (pro rata) Dependant on qualifications and experience

Qualifications & Experience

- Registered Nurse 1st level
- Evidence of continual professional development
- Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to work as part of a multi-disciplinary team
- A flexible and tactful approach
- Caring and friendly personality

Interviews for this role will be held on 9 March 2016

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Liz Justice, Ward Manager on 01843 234552

For a job description and application form please visit www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

Alternatively, please contact Mathew Thomas, HR Apprentice

Telephone: 01304 222690

E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

(Previous applicants need not apply)



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Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Dover eye double date at Wembley

Boss Chris Kinnear insists his players remain 100% focused

Football

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

AFTER Tuesday night's 3-0 FA Trophy win over Guiseley booked Dover Athletic's place in the last eight, they could be forgiven for dreaming of a date with Wembley.

Particularly when taking into account the possibility of making the play-off final in May, too, 2015/16 could be a very fruitful season for the Whites, as they look to secure promotion from the National League to the holy grail of the Football League.

But boss Chris Kinnear says his players are not planning their route up the M20 just yet, and remain focused on the more immediate tasks that lie ahead.

He told KoS: "We're doing well and we'd love to reach Wembley, not just once, but twice.

"Having said that, we can't get carried away, there's a long way to go and, even though it's a cliché, we've just got to take one game at a time."

Consistency is crucial as we approach the business end of the campaign, but with Dover alternating between wins and losses in each of their last eight league games prior to this weekend, that's proving somewhat difficult to achieve.

"If we won every game, we'd be top of the league," Kinnear said.

"But that's just not possible, not even Leicester are winning every game because anyone can beat anyone and that makes it interesting.

"We've just got to keep going, keep working hard, and see where we finish at the end of the season.



CUP: Dover manager Chris Kinnear

"I don't think the boys need any particular motivation from me, they know what we can achieve."

While the January transfer window was reasonably quiet for Dover in terms of playing staff, Kinnear did bring Loui Fazakerley into the dug-out at Crabble, just days after he was

sacked as Welling United manager.

"I've known Loui for a long time and I wouldn't have brought him in if I didn't think he could do a good job for us," he added.

"He's primarily here to work on our fitness but also brings a lot of experience as well."

Kent snap up South Africa paceman Rabada

Cricket

KENT have announced the short-term signing of highly-rated South Africa fast bowler Kagiso Rabada.

The Johannesburg-born paceman, 20 will join the club for a two-month spell in the summer, and said after completing his move: "I will play hard and try my best.

"I want to learn from the experience - particularly bowling in different conditions.

"Most of all I am looking forward to enjoying the experience."

He will join Kent in late June after South Africa's tri-series against Australia and West Indies in the Caribbean, until he is due to report back for international duty against New Zealand in August.



SIGNING: Kent Cricket Club

Rabada is in line to make his T20 Blast debut against Sussex Sharks at The Spitfire Ground on June 30 and

is also in contention to face Essex Eagles, Somerset, Gloucestershire and Surrey, while there are also CC matches with Essex and Sussex and a Royal London One-Day Cup match against Middlesex.

Rabada impressed against England on their tour, taking 22 wickets in three tests and nine wickets in four ODIs.

Club chairman George M Kennedy said: "We've all been hugely impressed by Kagiso in the recent series against England and I'm looking forward to seeing him playing for Kent this summer.

"He follows in the footsteps of a number of South Africans and I hope he enjoys his spell here and that Kent will become county of choice for this very promising young bowler in future years."

Sport Shorts

» Email sports@kosmedia.co.uk or call Tom Pyman on 01233653477

Gills sign Welsh striker Williams from Fulham

GILLINGHAM have bolstered their attacking options as their promotion bid gathers pace, with the signing of Welsh striker George Williams.

The 20-year-old has agreed a loan deal until the end of the season from Fulham with the option of being available for the play-offs also on the table.

Williams is a Welsh international having represented his country on six occasions, and has also featured for the U21 squad.

The forward began his career with MK Dons prior to joining Fulham in 2012 where he has made 17 appearances in all competitions.

Boss Justin Edinburgh said: "We are delighted to have George on board, we have been looking to add to our options for a while and he fits the bill perfectly.

"He has experience of league and international football and I have no doubt he will offer our forward line something different between now and the end of the season."



BOSS: Justin Edinburgh



HOME: Maidstone's Gallagher Stadium

Saunders extends stay at Maidstone United

JAY Saunders has extended his contract as manager of Maidstone United.

The 37-year-old is approaching five years in the job, and has been rewarded for taking the club from the Ryman South to second place in the National League South.

He said: "I am delighted to agree a new deal and thank the owners for their continued backing.

"We've achieved so much in the past few years and I am excited to be part of the future."

The Stones' chief executive Bill Williams added: "The board is absolutely delighted with the job that Jay has done for the club and equally delighted that he sees his future here. We all hope we are able to meet our aims and objectives over the coming years."

Fleet defender departs on loan

EBBSFLEET United defender Reiss Greenidge has secured a month's loan move to fellow National League South side Hemel Hempstead Town.

The teenager only joined Ebbsfleet United a matter of weeks ago, and made his debut for the club at Oxford City last weekend.

The 6ft 5in former Arsenal prospect, 19, was most recently with Port Vale and Ipswich Town U21s on

loan, but came through the Gunners' academy before joining West Bromwich Albion in 2013.

He'll team up with Fleet teammate Sean Shields, who also joined the Tudors on loan last month.

In other news, the club's Kent Reliance Senior Cup semi-final against Charlton Athletic at Stonebridge Road has been arranged for Tuesday, March 15.

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